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OUR COUNTY:

OR,

HAMPSHIRE IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

By HENRY MOODY,

CURATOR OF THE WINCHESTER MUSEUM.

Domum, nil e Domum.

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Dedication.

TO

FREDERICK PERKINS, Esq.

THRICE MAYOR OF SOUTHAMPTON,

THIS LOCAL WORK

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

HENRY MOODY.

Winchester, *April* 15, 1863.

INTRODUCTION.

THE design of the author of the following pages is to present to his readers a picture of his native County nearly two hundred years ago, and to illustrate obsolete manners and feelings.

That he might use his pen with the greater freedom, and introduce, at pleasure, a variety of subjects, he has chosen the form of a Local Tale, even as in the olden time, important truths were sometimes revealed under the guise of Parables.

In the present work the greater portion of the incidents are fictitious, but there are among them others which are well-authenticated facts; and of the personages, many of them derive their existence solely from the author's fancy, and there are others which, to many, must be "as familiar as their household words;" whilst the description of the towns and villages of Hampshire, and the scenery and general appearance of the county, though but sketches of the imagination, are based on the observation and local enquiry of the author for many years, and may be accepted as being correct in general.

The principal events of a local character which have been introduced into the work are,

I.—That towards the close of his reign, Charles II. was a frequent visitor to Winchester, and his residence on such occasions was the Deanery; and that on the site of the ancient castle he commenced the erection of a splendid palace, of which Sir Christopher Wren was the architect. The same year his Majesty, and his brother, the Duke of York, were admitted to the freedom of the City, and in return he presented the Corporation with a full-length portrait of himself, painted by Sir Peter Lely, and which is still to be seen

in St. John's House. The entry in the Corporation Archives is as follows:— "This day [Sept. 1, 1682], our Gratious Soveraigne Lord King Charles 2nd, was pleased to condescend to be entered to be a member of this Corporation, and is entered accordingly to be free of the Guild of Merchants of this Citty."

II.—That in the year 1667, Winchester was fearfully depopulated by the ravages of the Plague. On this occasion cart-loads of dead bodies were nightly carried from the town and deposited in pits, dug for the purpose, on Magdalen Down, and some faint idea of the extent of the devastation may be arrived at by surveying the several large grassy mounds, resembling ancient barrows, which are still to be seen about a quarter of a mile from the Fair ground.

III.—That a fierce encounter, locally known as the Cheriton Fight, took place in the neighbourhood of Alresford, between the Royalists and Parliamentarians. The battle was fought on Friday, the 29th of March, 1643, and the particulars of it are to be found in Duthy's Sketches of Hampshire. The Royalists, who were nominally under the command of Lord Forth, but in reality were commanded by Lord Hopton, were completely routed by the Parliamentarians under Sir William Waller, who, by this victory, was enabled to take possession of Winchester.

IV.—That the Corporation of Portsmouth surrendered their old charter to Charles II., and received from him another charter, which, though nominally conferring greater privileges on the Corporation, placed them under the control of the Crown, which is shown by the following extract from the Report of the Commissioners on Municipal Corporations, 1835:— "The charter of Charles I. was surrendered to Charles II., and a new charter granted in the 34th year of his reign. By this latter the Vill of Gosport was united to the borough of Portsmouth, and it contained a clause for the removal of the officers [mayor and aldermen] *ipso facto* by

the *sign manual;* and also contained a grant of free passage to and from Gosport and Ryde, and with liberty to maintain boats, &c." At the Revolution the new charter was declared null and void, and the old charter, which was found in the hands of a private individual, again became the governing one.

V.—That Mistress Alice Lisle was tried for and convicted of high treason, and subsequently executed, in Winchester. Of this known historical event, the particulars, though briefly, are truly, stated in our tale, save that the lady's age is set down at ninety, when it should have been seventy. Her attainder, or conviction, was reversed by Act of Parliament, 1st of William and Mary, on the ground that she had been convicted by an irregular and undue prosecution, and was indicted for entertaining, concealing, and comforting John Hicks (clerk), a false traitor, knowing him to be such, though the said John Hicks was not at the trial of the said Alice Lisle, attainted or convicted of any such crime; and by a verdict injuriously extorted, and procured by menaces and violences, and other illegal practices of George Lord Jefferies, Baron Wem, and then Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench.

Besides the above there are numerous other local incidents, which the author has introduced, which will be easily detected by those versed in our Hampshire history.

The Personages who figure in our tale, may be ranged under two heads, the real, and the fictitious; and of the former the author feels himself bound to explain under what circumstances the names of historical characters have been introduced into a local tale, and therefore he will here introduce them in rotation, and point out their connection with the County at the very period of which he is speaking.

As the Royal Brothers have already been spoken of, the author would pass on to—

Doctor Kenn, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells.—He was originally a scholar, and subsequently a Fellow of Win-

chester College, and at the period of our tale a Prebendary of the Cathedral. Gentle as was this illustrious Confessor of the English Church, he had the firmness to refuse the King the giving up his house for the accommodation of a royal mistress.

Mistress Eleanor *alias* Nell Gwyn, the lady in question, was certainly a resident of Winchester. For a time she was accommodated with a residence at the Deanery, and until the commencement of the present century, there was attached to it a building known as "Nell Gwyn's lodgings." A house in St. Peter's Street, now the Probate Office, was afterwards her residence, and on the tops of the lead water-spouts appear the initials, "E. G., 1683."

Richard Cromwell was connected with Hampshire by his marriage with Dorothy, the daughter and heiress of Richard Major, Esq., of Hursley. In 1656 he was elected as one of the members for the County, and three years later, upon his deposition from the Protectorship, he retired from Hampton Court to Hursley Lodge; and if tradition is to be trusted, he was wont in his convivial hours to seat himself on a large chest, and say,—"I sit upon the lives and fortunes of half the good people of this Realm of England," being a sarcastic allusion to the adulatory addresses which had been presented to him on his accession to the Protectoral power. After a short time spent at Hursley, being pressed for those debts which the Parliament had promised to pay, he left England for the Continent, where he remained twenty years. In 1675 his wife died, and his son Oliver claimed and obtained possession of the Hursley property, to which he quietly submitted, and four years afterwards returned to England, and resided at Cheshunt, but frequently visited Hampshire, under the assumed name of Clarke.

Dr. Isaac Watts.—No one will have the temerity to deny that this good man was born at Southampton, where his statue, erected by the voluntary subscriptions of his admirers,

may be seen. In the tale he is introduced as a child, and such he was in 1682. The notice of him and his father is grounded on the following extract from the *Penny Magazine*: "Dr. Isaac Watts, the eldest of nine children, was born at Southampton, July 17, 1674. His father, who kept a boarding-school in that town, was a man of strong devotional feeling, and a rigid Nonconformist. He was imprisoned on account of his religion, and during his confinement his wife sat upon a stone at the prison door with little Isaac, then an infant, at her breast. The child showed a taste for books at a very early age, and imbibed under his parents, whose faith had been strengthened by persecution, that turn of mind which prompted the determination to become a Dissenting clergyman. He entered into the study of the learned languages in the Free Grammar School of his native town in his fourth year. The little money he received in presents he spent upon books; his leisure hours he spent in reading, instead of joining other boys at play. When seven or eight years old he composed some devotional pieces to please his mother. His gentle and vivacious disposition obtained him friends, who offered to support him at one of the Universities, but having been bred a Nonconformist, he determined to remain one. He was therefore, in his sixteenth year, sent to an academy in London, kept by Mr. Thomas Howe, an Independent minister."

Roger Coram.—The authority for the statement that the Roman Catholics of Winchester are indebted to this gentleman for the site of their chapel and surrounding property, is Dr. Milner, who for twenty-four years was the Pastor of that Congregation, and who, in his well-known History of Winchester, says that:— "Soon after the Great Plague in 1667, a worthy and religious man, Roger Coram, built a house on the site of the ancient church of St. Peter de Marcello, where there has always been a Catholic chapel, either in the house itself or in a detached building in its

garden." There is a headstone to his memory in St James's (R. C.) Burial-ground, and in the library of Peter House there are several religious books inscribed with a bold hand, "Roger Coram." Another of the same name appears to have been the possessor of the Cranbury estate in the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

William Lord Russell, the illustrious martyr of the Whig Calendar, became connected with Hampshire by his marriage with Rachel, second daughter, and one of the co-heiresses of Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and by this alliance became the lord of the most extensive manor of central Hampshire. That he resided at Stratton House the published letters of his bereaved widow sufficiently prove. The Micheldever estate continued in the hands of his descendants (the Dukes of Bedford) till early in the present century, when it was purchased by Sir Francis Baring, the grandfather of the present baronet; hence the assertion in the tale, that the banner of Whiggism still floats over Stratton House.

Dr. Gilbert Burnett.—To connect this reverend divine with Hampshire may be considered a hard task: but as he was the personal friend and co-patriot of Lord Russell, and attended him to the scaffold, he has been pressed into the service. That he was well-intentioned, and a man of business, all will admit; but that he had a chattering tongue, none can deny.

Sir John Norton, of Rotherfield.—All that can be said of this baronet is, that he was the head of a very old Hampshire family, who derived their name from Norton, in the parish of Selbourn, and became lords of the manors of Rotherfield and Tisted as early as the reign of Edward I. Thomas de Norton was one of the Members for Hampshire in 1340, and in the Sheriffs' rolls there is scarcely a family in the County of greater repute.

Colonel Richard Norton, of Southwick, and the "idle Duke Norton" of Oliver Cromwell's familiar letters, was a kinsman

of the above. In early life he resided at the Manor-house of Old Alresford, and on several occasions represented the County. In the civil war he distinguished himself in the cause of the Parliament, and materially contributed to the victory of Cheriton, by bringing up a body of horse, through the bye-ways from his knowledge of the country, to charge the rear of the Royalists. The present proprietor of Southwick Park, Thomas Thistlethwaite Esq., is his descendant. Whether that "conformable gentleman," the last Prior of Southwick, whose name was William Norton, and who received the pension stated, was his relative, is more than the author can vouch.

Harry Wallop, of Farleigh Wallop and Hurstbourn, was a member of several Parliaments in the reigns of Charles II., James II., and William and Mary. He died unmarried, in 1691, aged 34 years, and was succeeded in the family estates by his brother, John Wallop, whose son was created Baron Wallop, of Farleigh Wallop, and Viscount Lymington in 1720, and Earl of Portsmouth in 1743. The Wallops, it is said, were established in Hampshire previous to the Norman Conquest. In the reign of King John, Matthew de Wallop had the custody of the Castle of Winchester, and in the following reign Sir Robert de Wallop was appointed, with the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford, to decide upon and settle the differences between Henry III. and the Barons. In 1329 Sir Richard de Wallop was one of the representatives of the County, and in the reign of Henry VIII., Sir Oliver Wallop was Admiral and Commander of the English Fleet, and was highly distinguished by his martial exploits.

Charles, the sixth Marquis of Winchester.—This is the nobleman, of whom it has been said, that indignant of the little notice which had been taken by Charles II. of his father's distinguished loyalty and severe losses, he changed both his politics and religion, and assumed the behaviour of one who had lost his wits. He danced, hawked, or hunted in the

morning, went to bed before noon, and constantly sat at table all night. He went to dinner at six in the evening, and his meal lasted till the same hour in the morning. The company were at liberty to rise and amuse themselves, or to take a nap; but the dishes and bottles remained on the table. Under this smoke there was fire; for on the landing of William III. at Torbay, he so exerted himself, and rendered such good services, that he was created Duke of Bolton.

Lord Chief Justice Jefferies.—This disgrace to the English Bench may have been in Winchester in 1683, as he certainly was in 1685, when he presided at the trial of Mistress Lisle. That which appears in the tale as his address to the grand jury is an adaptation from remarks he made in his Charge to the petty jury at the trial in question. And here the author would state that what appears as—"A Trial of the Seventeenth Century," was written in imitation of those which appear in ten folio volumes, published one hundred and thirty years ago, entitled "A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings upon High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanours, from the reign of King Richard II. to the end of the reign of King George I."

Sir Robert Sawyer, of Highclere.—This gentleman was the Attorney-General at the period of the tale. Early in the reign of James II., dissatisfied with the king's proceedings in the matter of the Established Church, he resigned his office, and in 1688 was the leading counsel for the Seven Bishops at their celebrated trial. Sir Robert's only daughter and heiress married Thomas Earl of Pembroke, from whose younger son the present Earl of Carnarvon is descended.

There are other well-known Hampshire names introduced during the progress of the story, and the author will now state his reason for so doing, namely, to pay a tribute of respect to long standing, and, as he thinks, to add interest to the tale.

To take them *seriatim*, the first name that occurs is Sir Henry Tichbourn, who was Warden of the New Forest in the

reign of Charles II., and Lieutenant of the Ordnance in the reign of James II. How many centuries the family has been seated at Tichbourn it would be hard to say, and none can deny the tenacity with which the members have clung to the Faith of their fathers. Walter and Philip Newbolt were intended to represent a very old and highly respected Winchester family. To show that the author has not given it a connection with the city too early, he would refer the reader to some head-stones in the Cathedral-yard, near the pathway leading to St. Maurice Church. With respect to the well-known family of Fleming, of Stoneham, they had been there located nearly a century, Sir Thomas Fleming having purchased the estate in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. During what is called the Grand Rebellion several of the family were warm supporters of the Parliament, and were, as the tale states, related to Oliver Cromwell.

To proceed:—the author's Sir Richard Mill appears as the representative of another old Hampshire family, seated successively at Tachbury, Nursling, and Mottisfont. Pike and Spicer are not only two old Portsmouth names, but those of members of a Corporation which, till the passing of the Reform Act, was as close as it is supposed to have been in the reign of the Merry Monarch; nor does the resemblance end here, for its members were as thoroughly buff and blue, as those of our story.

Another local name is Pollen, and to show that a member of this family was connected with Andover at the time, the author submits the following extract from "A Collection of Debates, Reports, Orders, and Resolutions of the House of Commons, touching the Right of Electing Members to serve in Parliament, by William Bohum":—"*Die Veneris*, 28 *Martii*, 1678:—A petition of John Pollen, setting forth that he was duly elected to serve in this Parliament, with Francis Pawlet, Esq., for the Borough of Andover, but by several illegal and undue practices, W. Withers, Esq. procured

himself to be returned as a Burgess of the said Borough: and was read and referred."

In the notice of the town of Andover, there is a mention of Daniel Dowling, the deputy-steward or townclerk, whilst in the Report of the Municipal Commissioners for Andover it is stated that William Dowling filled that office in 1694, only twelve years after the date of our tale. It is highly probable, that the said William Dowling was a member of a family long resident in the adjoining village of Clatford, one of whom, only a few years since, filled the civic chair at Winchester.

The High Sheriff, in the 21st Chapter, must be taken as the representative of the well-known Mildmay family, who for upwards of two centuries were lords of the Manor of Twyford. At the period of the tale, there was a Knight at Chawton Park; a Terry at Dummer Manor, where they had been seated for centuries; and a Chute at the Vine; and the author thinks their names have not been improperly introduced.

As to the fictitious characters, "I own to the soft impeachment" that some of them were drawn from life, and one I proudly acknowledge to be an attempted sketch of a self-made and enterprising man—the late Richard Andrews of Southampton.

Clergymen such as Parson Farr are happily becoming scarce, but may Hampshire long continue to possess many, very many, such as Parson Crochet.

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OUR COUNTY:

OR,

HAMPSHIRE IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES II.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPITAL.

"On Thursday, the 21st August, I took Winchester in my way homewards, where I saw an ancient city like a body without a soul; and I know not the reasons of it, but for aught which I perceived there were almost as many parishes as people. I lodged at the sign of the Cock, being recommended to the host of the house by a token from Salisbury; but mine host died the night before I came, and I, being weary, had more mind to go to bed than follow him so long a journey, to do my message and deliver my commendations. But the whole city seemed almost as dead as my host, and it may be they were all at harvest work, but I am sure I walked from one end of it to the other, and saw not thirty people of all sorts; so I think that if a man should go to *Winchester* for a *goose* he might lose his labour, for a trader cannot live there by vending such commodities."—JOHN TAYLOR.

SUCH is the description given by the famed "Water Poet" of Winchester in 1623, a city which a few centuries before was the seat of royalty and government, which could boast of its regal and episcopal palaces, well-endowed abbeys, and churches almost innumerable; and according to the words inscribed on the city tables—now to be seen in the Muniment Room—"hath given place of birth, education, baptism, marriage, michelgenots, gemots, synods (national and provincial), and sepulchre to more kings, queens, princes, dukes, earls, barons, bishops, and mitred prelates, before the year of our Lord 1239, than all the other cities of England could do:" but which had become a dull, decayed, and half deserted country town, with a population hardly exceeding 3,000

persons. Manufactures there were none, and wealthy inhabitants but few; nor were the Cathedral and College establishments of such importance as they have since become, so that the trade of the place was mainly dependant on a thinly-populated agricultural district, of which it was the centre.

The city itself was, or rather had been, surrounded by a wall, several feet thick, of which small portions still exist, and which originally was constructed by the Romans during their occupation of Britain, full fourteen centuries anterior to the time of which we are speaking; but, like everything else belonging to the place, was in a state of decay—here and there exhibiting large gaps through which a dozen men could walk abreast, with huge heaps of stone and rubbish; whilst in other places, where the masonry was sound, it was completely mantled with ivy. Without the wall there was a fosse, or ditch, formerly broad and deep, and supplied with water from the river, crossed at the gateways by drawbridges; but these had long disappeared and their places were supplied by causeways of solid earth, whilst the ditch was half-filled-up with rubbish. In some places there were stagnant pools, in others entangled masses of furze, brambles, and underwood—a safe retreat for vermin; whilst the sides were studded in all the rankness of disorder with elm, sycamore, maple, and ash trees.

The ancient castellated gateways were still standing, but time and neglect had deprived them of their former beauty and imposing appearance: the gates themselves had long been removed, or had fallen from their hinges, whilst the space enclosed consisted rather of fields and gardens than of streets and houses.

At the south-western extremity of the city, on the gradual declivity of a chalk hill, though apparently on a detached rock, stood the blackened remains of the once famous Castle of Winchester, which claimed for its founder the renowned King Arthur, famed in legendary lore for his marvellous battles, his round table, and twenty-four knights: and lastly, as the friend and patron of Jack the Giant-killer: and which castle showed the kingcraft of "Billy the Norman," and in which one of the successors of the said Billy, Henry III., was born; and another successor, Harry of Monmouth, sent brave defiance to the Dauphin of France; but—

> "'Tis now the raven's bleak abode,
> 'Tis now th' apartment of the toad;
> And there the pois'nous adder breeds,
> Concealed in ruins, moss, and weeds."

It was one of the strongholds of the unhappy Charles, and one of the last which withstood the hero of Naseby, to whom it was at last surrendered, and who, with his accustomed policy of not allowing its being again the refuge of Royalists and malignants, blew up with gunpowder the greater portion, and rendered the whole uninhabitable: the sounds of merriment and the challenges of the soldiery being now exchanged for the cawing of daws and the hooting of owls, and in this condition it remained for about forty years.

The High-street then, as now, ran from the Westgate to the stone bridge which spanned the Itchen, a distance of about half-a-mile, but of variable breadth. The houses on both sides were in general continuous, save here and there was a piece of ground occupied as garden, and the narrow, very narrow openings to the side streets, none of which exceeded ten feet. The houses were of all sizes, shapes, and heights, defiant to any claim to order and regularity, principally with gable roofs, and with each floor one above the other projected more and more into the street, and tiled; but, with few exceptions, the tiling was half covered with fungi, and up and down like the waves of the sea. The fronts in most cases consisted of a framework of timber, the interstices filled with brick, tile, or plaster—or, perhaps, wattle and daub. It would seem that originally the timber-work had been painted, alike for ornament and use, but such had not been the case of late years with most of them, which displayed unmistakeably the effects of wind and weather, and the ruinous consequences of neglect.

No portion of the street was paved, but all of it was very badly pitched with headed flints, the inhabitants of the several houses being required by an ordinance of the Corporation to pave (that is to say, to pitch) and keep in repair the street in front of the premises they occupied as far as the gutter which ran down the middle thereof, so that there was a long line of patchwork, some of it tolerably and some of it wretchedly executed, and some of it not at all; and, as neighbours were not always neighbourly, the junctions were any but what they ought to have been, and very apt to trip up the passers by, whether on foot or horseback. In addition to this, the street was rendered the more incommodious by obstructions in the way of boards in front of the shops, on which articles were exposed for sale, and by the use the inhabitants of the houses made of the streets in depositing

therein all kinds of rubbish, and not unfrequently filth, trolling of mops, and other nuisances.

From the Westgate to the Cross the descent was far more rapid than at present, and the street was of a fair width; and the houses in a better condition than those situated in any other part of the city; but from the Cross to the Bridge there was very little fall, and in some parts the streets were so narrow that the roofs of the opposite houses were within a few feet of each other, so that gleams of sunshine were like angel's visits, and only to be obtained in the months of June or July, early in the morning and again at noon. The road consequently was always damp, and the houses on both sides subject to inundations. Still further eastward, down the middle of the street, ran a broad stream fed by the waters which still flow through the streets now known as Upperbrook, Middlebrook, and Lowerbrook.

Without the Eastgate there was the bridge to which we have already alluded; it was said to have been first erected by St. Swithin, the Bishop of Winchester, of *rainy* memory, and tutor to Alfred the Great; but this was of a much later date. It was an inconvenient structure, and so narrow, that only one vehicle could pass at a time, and over the centre arch there was a recess, by which foot passengers could get out of harm's way. The streets which diverged from the High-street would more properly be called lanes, being more rustic than urban, not one of them containing more than a score of houses, or rather cottages; hardly any of them rising above the second floor, mean in appearance, and in general covered with thatch; in short, nearly the whole space to the north of the High-street was gardens and fields, very indifferently separated, and in a worse state of cultivation, nettles and docks being allowed to increase and multiply without creating any Malthusian alarm; hog-styes and cow-sheds were more numerous than human habitations, and what there were of the latter were, in accommodation and appearance, very little superior to the former. Through the lower portion of this space flowed three small streams, "with mantling cresses spread," and which, though in recognised public ways, were not confined to any limits, but wandered at pleasure, there rushing at a rapid pace, and here expanding into miniature lakes, studded with tiny islands, a favourite resort for the boys of all parts of the city to play "follow the leader," and "hop, step, and jump."

To the south of the High-street the Cathedral rose in majestic grandeur far above all the other buildings of the city, whilst the prebendal houses in the Close had either been rebuilt or materially improved during the twenty years which followed the Restoration; but in the remaining portion of the town lying to the west of the Cathedral precincts, the buildings were only in a slight degree superior to those situated on the north side of the High-street.

In four different parts of the city were to be seen the crumbling remains of parish churches, roofless, and abandoned to their fate; their timbers, long before carried away as fuel, and their stone and brick only remaining because there was no demand for building materials.

Such was Winchester, when the fancy of the only popular monarch of the ill-starred House of Stuart was struck with the site of its ancient castle, and resolved to erect thereon a palace which should rival in magnificence and extent, and show itself more prominently to the world than the one which had recently been erected by his brother monarch, Louis XIV., at Versailles, and he had no sooner made up his mind than he set about it with an earnestness and vigour which was very foreign to his, in general, easy and indolent character; Sir Christopher Wren was appointed the architect for the intended palace, a Parliamentary grant was obtained, and designs and plans were prepared without loss of time, and within twelve months the King laid the first stone.

To expedite the undertaking which he had so much at heart, Charles, during the few remaining years of his life, paid frequent and long-continued visits to Winchester, and took up his residence at the Deanery. As "inferior eyes gather their behaviour from the great," so all that loved to sport and flutter in the sunshine of royalty, the children of fashion, and the worshippers of the ruling star, wended their way Itchenward, and became denizens of Winchester—where old houses were patched up, whilst others were being erected for the accommodation of the new comers. "Again there was the sound of voices, the trampling of busy feet, and of people hurrying to and fro, the smith's hammer was heard upon the anvil, and the harsh saw of the carpenter." The genius of the place was aroused from his slumber of a hundred years, trade revived, active exertion was again called for, and the future prosperity of the city appeared laid upon an adamantine foundation.

So rapid was the progress of the works, not only at the royal palace, but in every portion of the town, during the three following years, that it is still a matter of surprise how so much could have been effected within that short period, and we cannot but suppose that artizans were drawn, by the promises of high wages, from the most distant parts of the kingdom. The then bishop, that staunch royalist, George Morley, in imitation of his sovereign, set about the rebuilding of his episcopal palace at Wolvesey, which had been reduced to a heap of ruins by the Parliamentary forces in the civil war. New streets were planned and partly laid out, and stately mansions arose both within the city and the Soke, many of which though "curtailed in their fair proportions," still remain.

Nor were the municipal authorities wanting on their part; long established nuisances were removed, the streets and other highways put in proper repair, and, for the first time, lighted and watched at the public cost, improvements were being made everywhere, and the city of a thousand years was putting on a new face.

CHAPTER II.

OAK-APPLE DAY.

"A grave Divine is a main pillar of our Church, and his life our Religion's best apology. His death is his last sermon, where in the pulpit of his bed he instructs me to die by his example."—Bp. Earle.

The little public-house now known as the "Royal Oak," was in the reign of the "Merry Monarch" an inn, or hostlery, of some importance, much frequented by farmers and butchers—the former disposing of their produce in the space under the present Guildhall, the latter having their shambles on the opposite side of the narrow passage in which the house is situated, at that time called Church-lane, from its leading from the High-street to the ancient church of St. Peter Marcellis, but more generally known as the church in the shambles; and the sign of the neighbouring hostlery was that of the "Crossed Keys," doubtlessly conferred as a kind of compliment to the first of the Apostles.

That the house was formerly of more importance than it is at present is apparent from its structure, its broad antique staircase, ancient carvings, and other decorations, still to be seen in several of the rooms, to say nothing of its rental in the old parish books, and its large yard and ample stabling, reduced even within the last thirty years.

A few years previous to the commencement of our tale, the shambles had been removed to another part of the city, and the samples of wheat, barley, and oats, not relishing to part company with those of mutton, beef, and veal, speedily followed them. This was a heavy blow to the landlady, Mistress Anne Scrubley, a widow of rather more than fifty years of age—a perfect pattern of honesty, industry, and cleanliness, but cursed with a tongue which could never cease being in motion from her uprising at early dawn till her lying down late at night. Travel from the Land's-end to Berwick-upon-Tweed, or even to Johnny Groat's house, you would not meet with a more hard-working woman. She was incessantly in motion, there was no sit-still in her; she was ever a-doing, she was ever in a fidget, always anxious to please her customers, and if sometimes she failed therein, it was that in her anxiety to please she would overshoot her mark. Her sins were not of omission, but commission, with the best and most praiseworthy intent. Before a single person was up in the house she was about working and scolding, scolding and working, and thus it went on day by day and week by week. Kind-hearted, she was ever foremost to relieve distress and to administer comfort, which had only one drawback, her manner of doing it; yet, in spite of her eternal clatter, she was a kind mistress, and her servants, all of whom were of long standing, were greatly attached to her. She was a tall spare woman, with a constitution, to use the words of our great lexicographer, "of undeterminable duration." She had never known a day's sickness, and it was her frequent boast that she had not time to be ill. Yet, in spite of her industry and frugality, Mistress Scrubley, or as the folks called her, "Ancient Nance," had enough to do to maintain her position, as the business of her house had gradually fallen off. Suitors she had had, some of whom she had frightened by her scolding, and to others she had given a flat denial; but at length came one who would not understand the monosyllable "No," and, though fre-

quently repulsed, returned again to the charge, and at length reaped the fruits of perseverance.

The happy man was one William Foster, *alias* "Black Will," *alias* "The Blackymoor," and more irreverently, "The Devil's Own," a Staffordshire lad, and nephew of the Pendrells of Boscobel, who rendered such essential service in the concealment of the King after his defeat at Worcester.

Will was an original—a perfect character—keen-witted, with the impulses of a spoiled child—he would, or he would not—ever had a will of his own—a devoted royalist, with attachments and prejudices which had "grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength," and which frequently displayed themselves in the most outrageous exhibitions.

He was now in his majesty's service, and was a very useful person in the royal stables and kennel; and to his especial care were all the puppies of the favourite spaniel breed known as those of King Charles entrusted. He had been off and on attached to the Court from the Restoration, and stood somewhat in favour with his royal master, to whom, however, he had frequently given offence by his loquacity, obstinacy, and wilful humour. Their acquaintance commenced when Will was a chubby, curly-headed boy of nine years of age at Mosely Hall, where he kept watch for soldiers whilst the royal fugitive was concealed in the priest's hole; and afterwards in Boscobel Wood, when his majesty was ensconced amidst the leafy covering of the royal oak. Will was a shrewd boy, did his work well, kept his own counsel and his countenance, and sent several Parliamentarians, who were in search of the hidden prize, upon fools' errands.

History informs us that Charles II., upon his Restoration to the throne of his ancestors, forgot the services of those who in his utmost need had perilled their lives for him; and Will was, therefore, in a large company after he had trudged from the borders of Shropshire to London in the hope of obtaining a substantial recognition of his own and his uncles' services. However, by dint of effrontery and perseverance he managed to get a footing in the royal stables. He was, however, idle and dissolute, and a dear lover of a practical joke or piece of mischief. Horses and dogs were his constant companions, whilst his evenings were invariably spent at some hostelry, where, warmed with liquor

and excitement, he would amuse the company with singing the most loyal effusions, interlarded with denunciations against Roundheads and Presbyterians, narrations real and fictitious, of the perils and sufferings of the royal Charley after the Worcester fight, and of his own exploits and importance.

Years rolled on, and the Boscobel boy is now a man of forty, not so nimble as he used to be, and begins to think it was now full time to settle in life.

In the year 1682, Charles II. came to Winchester, and took up his residence at the Deanery, with the object of expediting the erection of his new palace on the site of the ancient castle, and in his train came Will Foster, who lodged himself at the Cross Keys, where his dashing manner, jovial bearing, and capital companionship, much delighted the landlady, rendered the more acceptable by the frequent visits of his fellow-servants, hangers-on, and expectants of the Court, to whom Will related his old stories with a new gloss, and thus detained them till late hours, to the profit of the hostess; and he did not fail to impress on her, as well as many a gaping cit, that he was in exceeding high favour with the king. The business of the Cross Keys was now reviving, and Will thought he had a good chance, and went in determined to win.

To settle down in life with a house which he could call his own, and a business, to which of all others he thought himself best adapted, though saddled with a scolding wife, had a charm which he could not resist. Within a fortnight of his arrival in Winchester he made an offer of marriage to the ancient hostess, but received a flat denial. He took it in good part, and was just as jolly as before, and two days later renewed his offer, but the "No, I won't" did not come out with the same energy and fierceness which it did before. Again his equanimity was undisturbed, and in the evening he entertained at his own cost a number of his fellow-servants and citizens. Three days had not elapsed when Will renewed his offer, and was again refused. Still cheerful and as merry as a cricket, our hero resolved that the third should not be the last time of asking, and he was emboldened therein that the last refusal was less tart than the second, and far, far less than the first.

To further his object he now determined upon a levee. He had already intimated to all with whom he had formed an acquaintance that he was all-in-all with the King, who in

many matters acted entirely on his advice, and he now informed divers tradesmen that he should be at home at the Cross Keys at a certain hour that evening, and that he should say something which they might turn to good account.

At the time "curfew's measured roar" was heard in the street, there was a goodly muster in the kitchen of the Cross Keys—a blazing fire on the hearth, and in one corner of the huge chimney sat our hero, with a lighted pipe as his sceptre, and a score of pushing, eager, and credulous cits, as his subjects.

Like one who knew how to play his cards, Will was conservatively communicative—made no rash promises, talked much, but gave no pledges—rather implied than asserted that he was hand-in-glove with the King, that he was high in favour with the Duke of York, his uncles the Pendrells being Catholics, and that he was in the confidence of that gentlest of womankind, Mrs. Eleanor Gwyn, and was often confided to distribute the numerous charitable gifts of that lady. Then he would have his say to the Lord Chamberlain, the Master of the Buckhounds, and the groom of the Stole: had the full run of the royal kitchen, and was on the most friendly terms with Mistress Tartlett, the royal housekeeper, who was always glad to see him and place before him something nice. Of the royal stable and kennel, though he was not the head, he knew how to manage things and to have his own way, and that a word from him would be very useful, either in obtaining employment, or of supplying the requirements of the court and gentry. In all his born days he was never in such a loyal place as Winchester, and he dearly loved it for that, and should like to become one of its citizens. Twenty-two years in the King's service was a smartish time, besides, he had a hand in saving his majesty's precious life when he was hunted like a wild beast by the Worcester bloodhounds. He could not bind himself to anything then, but his eyes should be always open, and his tongue ready to wag, to serve them at any time—and they might trust him.

The company were in ecstacies, and drank to the health of good Master Foster over and over again, and it almost seemed as if it were never to stop, for as each mug was replenished the drinker gave his health, which was sure to draw forth another volley of applause, which was again and

again responded to by the company, when up rose from the opposite chimney-corner a very important person in his own conceit—Mark Ruddle, one of the Corporation servants known as sergeant-at-mace, parish clerk, farrier, and cow and dog doctor, who spoke as follows :—

"We be all debtors to Master Foster for what he has said about our city, which he mayn't know be the ancientest city in all the world, begun as I have been told, a few years after the Flood, and some do say there was a city here before Noah's time. Master Foster be of the right sort, true to his King and true to his Church, and he will do well to settle amongst us. I am sure the Corporation will be proud of him, and I will say a word for him to the mayor, when I waits upon his worship for orders in the morning. And if I may speak my mind, and Master Foster is a bachelor, I would advise him to marry a Winchester woman, and then he'd be a Winchester man, and we should call him one of us, shouldn't us, neighbours? We have some niceish women here, I assure ye; no place better. I myself have three daturs, and they be all comely wenches, and Master Foster be at liberty to choose which of 'em he should like best. I should be proud to have Master Foster as my son-in-law, and that would be introducing him to the Corporation."

The last sally was too much for the company, who were convulsed with laughter, while the speaker sat down, rubbing his hands, having evidently mistaken merriment for approbation, when up started a little fellow with a bald pate, and keen gray eyes, and who had been scowling at Mark during the whole of his harangue.

"Humph! ha! A pretty fellow you are for a parish clerk—you have as much pride as old Lucifer—a town sergeant's wench for such a gentleman as Master Foster—that key won't fit, and you must take Bet, Sal, and Suke to another market; that won't do at any price;" and then changing his growl to a chuckle, "I know what will—ha, ha, ha, what say you, gentlemen, to our hostess? Capital match—house her own—lots of goldens in the cupboard, and good custom. You can't do better, Master Foster, you can't do better, and here's to your health, and the same to Mistress Scrubley, and may you live long and happy together."

He then tossed off his liquor, an example which was speedily followed by the rest of the company, who did not fail to unite the name of Will Foster with that of ancient Nance.

It is said that the lady was within hearing, but she did not make her appearance, was somewhat nervous at the moment, but had a very pleasant dream at night.

The next morning Will recommenced operations, and now the former blunt refusal was modified to a civil decline of the offer, and so civil that Will interpreted it to mean "Try again;" and he did try and now the opposition was very faint and at length quite melted away, and ancient Nance became Mistress Foster, and Will the proprietor and keeper of the Cross Keys, and for the first time in his life with money in his pocket.

The honeymoon had scarcely waned when Mistress Foster learned by experience the truth of the old saying, "Marry in haste, and repent at leisure," and found that her husband was not the man she took him to be. A merry soul, and in general an agreeable companion, but addicted to practical jokes and somewhat to offend his customers by the exuberance of his loyalty, and his fearful denunciations of those who entertained more moderate views.

With all that earnestness which marked his character, Will set to work to revive the custom of the house. The servants of the court, and those of the nobility and gentry who had come to reside in Winchester resorted to it every evening where they were sure to meet a large company of citizens, expectants, and desirants of the royal patronage, and all who wished their loyalty to be known and appreciated. At these meetings the chair was invariably taken by Alderman Buskin, who had the honour and profit of supplying the king's kitchen with cheese, butter, bacon, and other salted provisions. As he enjoyed the patronage of his most gracious majesty, he felt it a bounden duty to bestow his patronage on his majesty's servants, with whom he was very anxious to stand on the best possible terms. The alderman was possessed of a great rotundity of form, with a face which resembled a full moon, save that the red was rather too deep. In the chair he was the most amiable of mortals, and his manner showed that he felt the weight of his official robe, which laid invisibly upon his shoulders. He never forgot he was an alderman of the city, and a justice of the peace; he was dignified and condescending to his fellow citizens; dignified and condescending to strangers; dignified and condescending to the waiters; and even when required to enforce order or reprove boisterous mirth, he was still dignified and condescending.

Thus far successful, and to give a new character to the house, and also to please his royal patron, Will pulled down the ancient sign of the Cross Keys, and stuck a glaring picture of the Royal Oak, not forgetting to introduce the King with a crown upon his head, looking out from among the branches, and himself at the foot of the tree, habited as a country lad, and misdirecting an armed horseman.

A roaring trade was now driven, and such as would have gladdened the heart of the landlady had she not felt it was labour in vain, and that she had a task as hopeless as to try to wash a blackamoor white.

Money was taken, and money was spent, but of the value of money Will had no more idea than a child. He was, ever had been, and ever would be, the child of impulse, and impulse had carried him into many a quagmire. Having money in his pocket, his extravagance knew no bounds, and he gratified every desire as it arose.

Pride, reverend divines informs us, is the first and worst of the deadly sins, and we all know what it cost Lucifer;

"And, if small things we may with great compare,"

Will had to pay a penalty resembling that paid by the once angelic chief—the loss of his sovereign's favour. Sudden prosperity is a hotbed in which the plant, or rather the weed, arrogance, grows at a rapid rate, and becomes rank and bloated. "Set a beggar on horseback, and we know where he will ride to;" and so with our hero—he had endured poverty and want with the patience of a Job, but good fortune was too much for him, it fairly turned his brain; and his self-importance was so unendurable in the royal stables, as to call for the intervention of the king, who, with his characteristic gentleness and skill, and urged by the fondness he entertained for the Boscobel boy, sought to allay the angry feelings on both sides, and restore harmony; but Will was upon his stilts, and from his stilts would not descend; and though he would die for the King, he would not get off his stilts, so he stilted out of the yard, and was forbidden to show his face there again. His loss of favour at court was soon followed by loss of custom at the Royal Oak. His finances were getting low, and he had not the patience to endure the scolding of his ancient spouse.

It was somewhat late in the month of May, 1683, depressed

in spirits, he wandered into the country, in a southern direction, till he found himself among the oak and ash trees of Twyford Park. Here he listened to the notes of the birds, all of which he could recognise, and marked their flight from branch to branch, and from tree to tree, till he forgot his own sorrows, and thought himself almost a boy again, and boy-like amused himself in searching for nests.

By-and-by he is among the branches of the "Hercules of the forest," not yet in full leaf, but bearing many of those excrescences known as "oak apples." Then it flashed upon his mind that three days hence would be the anniversary of the Restoration of his royal, but offended patron. For some minutes he was lost in thought—then he muttered—then paused, and thought again—and then came a triumphant toss of the head, a sparkling of the eyes, and rubbing of the hands, and these words, "It will do, it will do, by Rowley, it will do." Will was satisfied.

Will was resolved to do something startling, but what that something was to be, we will not here say.

Behold now our hero as busy as any school-boy, gathering oak-apples; and when he obtained all that one tree afforded he descended from it, and then ascended another. For hours he was thus engaged; and when the sun went down he was still among the oak branches; and then, heavily laden returned home.

"Where have you been all the blessed day?" was the first ejaculation which saluted his ears, followed by expressions of anything but a soothing tendency. But Will was silent; his mind was set, and so crammed with the one object in view, that all other things, including the scolding of the wife, past unheeded by. Having placed his precious burden in one of the stables, which he safely secured, and contenting himself with a single draught of beer, went to bed.

Two hours later there was a curtain lecture, and "Where have you been?" was the text; and the preacher held forth, if not right eloquently, very forcibly, and very loudly, but in vain, for the congregation was deaf.

A bright summer's morning was not lost by Will. By four o'clock he had taken his morning draught, and with a bag replenished with bread and cheese, was hastening in the direction of Hursley, where he obtained a large supply of oak apples: and it was not till an hour before sunset that he got beneath the shade of Old Trinity, faint and weary, for his

load consisted not only of the apple, but green branches from the monarch of the wood.

Again are his ears greeted—"Where have you been, you lazy dog—you drunken hound?" But Will smiled with conscious innocence, assured that the epithets could not apply to him. He was not drunk, and he had not been idle; and having again deposited his burthen in the stable, came into the house, where as luck would have it, there was not a soul but his wife.

Again there is a burst of passion from the ancient dame, and titles, not of honour, but opprobrium, are conferred, followed by denunciations, crowned by fearful prophecies. Will is undismayed, and patiently awaits his turn to speak; and as to the most violent tide there is an ebb—so, from sheer exhaustion and nothing else, the crone ceases to scold.

"Wife," says Will, taking advantage of the calm, "for once in my life I be right."

"All wrong, all wrong, you hang-dog rascal," was the quick reply of his wife, who would have gone on, but for lack of breath.

"I'll make it all right with Rowley."

"Rowley! what Rowley?"

"Why, old woman, the Royal Charley, our good king—my old friend and master, whose life I saved, and served many a long year."

"Out you fool! ain't you forbidden his presence, his kennel, and what is more, his kitchen?"

"That may be, Nance, but I will go again, and that with a welcome and a smile. I—I—"—and shaking his head, "have hit"—

"Serve thee right to be well hit, soundly thrashed with an ash rod, for being such a drunken fool and graceless scamp"—

"And to be kissed and fondled, wife, if I have craft to get back, and I will, Nance, that will I."

"Pshaw, what witch has told thee so? out with you, fool, out with you."

"Nay, nay, wench, good wife, gentle Nance, do you but listen, and sit down, old girl."

And Will pleaded so pathetically, that Nance did sit down upon the settle close by his side, and she did listen, but what was said we dare not tell; suffice that before they had finished their talk they were as loving as in the courting days.

"Aye, Nance," cried Will, jumping up and snapping his fingers, "before three days I will be again in the king's stables, and you shall eat and drink in the king's kitchen."

"I hope so, Will Foster."

"Aye, and you shall, Nance, and kiss his Majesty's hand and pat his pet spaniels—ha—ha—ha—that you shall," and then clapping and rubbing his hands, marched out into the stable, where, for more than an hour, he was employed in turning into shape and form the several portions of his two loads.

In the house the mistress was also busy, though customers were scant. Tom the Windy, one of the helpers of the yard, was despatched to the mill to bring home two bushels of wheaten flour; Jack Scraper, another helper, was sent with a message to Dame Turley, of Pudding-house Farm, to be sure to bring in a large quantity of butter and eggs the next morning; and Betty, the scullery wench, was sent here and there for lard, raisins, yeast, and spices.

It was clear that something was going forward which the morrow was partly to reveal, and the morrow was a busy day alike with the host and hostess of the Royal Oak. The first was engaged in trimming his sprigs of oak, threading the whole town and inviting the youngsters of all degrees to his house to breakfast the next morning, where they were to be regaled with plum cake and strong beer, and to receive a gilded oak-apple to wear in their caps in honour of the blessed Restoration of King Charles, and where an opportunity occurred, he hinted that it was by his majesty's desire. Nor did Will confine his invitations to the rising generation, for many tradesmen and others of his acquaintance were also bidden to come.

In the house it was bustle, bustle, bustle, and the landlady had not even time to scold. There were the two bushels of flour to be made into cakes and baked; hands, gammons, and choppers to be boiled; beer to be tapped, and tables to be laid out; and all went on pleasantly. The work was done, and Will and his wife went tired and happy to bed.

The next day was the 29th of May, the twenty-third anniversary of the Restoration, and the fifty-third of the birth of King Charles, and a glorious summer's day it was. The wind, which up to the preceding evening had been in the east, was now direct south. A gentle shower during the night had refreshed the thirsty ground, but by sunrise the

clouds had veered to the north, and the powerful king of day rose in the east triumphant. The birds were in full chorus, the blooming flowers spread their fragrance far and wide, and bowed their heads in grateful homage to Him from whom they derived light and heat.

Will was up and about before this, and expectation stood on tiptoe.

The clock had hardly gone six, when the bells of old Trinity rang a merry peal, followed by the bells of numerous parish churches.

Over the West-gate floated the royal standard, and on the towers of the Cathedral and other churches there were also flags, and from most of the houses of the High-street were suspended green boughs, principally oak; but the real "Birnam wood" was yet in the stable of the Royal Oak.

By eight o'clock the boys began to make their appearance; and Will, assisted by his yard helpers, commenced his labours by decorating their caps with the insignia of loyalty, reminding each individual that the two great commandments were, "To fear God and honour the King."

The youngsters now turned in faster and faster, so that they amounted to several hundreds, all of whom received a big lump of cake and a small horn of beer, which they were not allowed to taste until they had severally proclaimed in a loud and audible voice—"The health of good King Charles and confusion to all his enemies!"

In addition to the young folk came many citizens of maturer age, who feasted on the hams, gammons, and choppers, which they washed down by repeated draughts from the huge flagons placed on the table.

Our friend, Alderman Buskin, officiated as chairman, and felt it his duty to condescend to patronise this very loyal movement, to see that order should prevail, and the peace of the city not be broken. He partook freely of one of the hams purchased at his own shop, and which he declared to be fit for the king's table.

Will saw all his friends happy, and was happy himself; but he did not forget the business, so that as soon as the alderman and company had had their fill, they were persuaded to adjourn into the yard where the boys were assembled. He now mounted a waggon and addressed them, explaining the reason why he had called them together, namely, to show his Majesty what loyalty there was in the good old city, and that

the citizens would not allow any Roundheads, Plotters, or Whigs to dwell among them, and that they all wished to train up a child in the way he should go, namely, in loyalty and reverence to the Lord's anointed; and then went on to say there was a sermon at the Cathedral, being Restoration Day, and it had been made known to him, by one high in favour, that his Majesty would take it as a great compliment, if the citizens, and more especially the young folk, would attend; and he was pleased to find they did love their king, and he was sure he would be a father to every man Jack of them.

Here the boys began shouting, and their huzzas were so prolonged and vehement, that the speaker could proceed no further, save that the whole party should march in procession to the Cathedral.

Will now proceeded to marshal the same, which was to be preceded by Sam the limper, a lame musician, well-known at revels and fairs, and other merry-makings. Sam, of pipe and tabor celebrity, was hired, or rather picked, for the occasion. After him were to follow the boys four abreast, some with flags, and others with long poles and green branches tied to them, and all with gilded oak-apples in their caps: then the loyal citizens, and lastly himself, mounted on one of his horses profusely decorated with oak-leaves.

The boys were delighted, again and again rended the air with their shouts; but some of the elders demurred, thinking there had been demonstration enough, which highly displeased Will, who fiercely declared that if any one should shrink from performing his duty, and the king's will, he would take care that he should not in any way receive any favour from the king or the nobility, and should be set down as a Roundhead and a Whig. The boys again shouted, and that so heartily, that their elders felt ashamed and drew in their horns, so the party travelled on their route.

From the yard of the Royal Oak the procession proceeded down the High-street, but the music of the pipe and tabor was drowned by the vociferation of the boys. Shout followed shout, or rather it was one continued shouting, rendered more energetic by a second draught of beer given to each before starting.

As the party passed along, they saw at every door the assembled household, and frequent were the calls from mothers to their children, to come indoors or to go to school,

but all in vain, not a boy breaks from his rank; and equally futile are the attempts of some parents to enforce their commands by making a prisoner of a lad, for there are a score to the rescue, and on they go, street after street, till they reach the Close-gate.

During the latter course of the route, the shouting had gradually subsided, but upon the procession's entrance into the peaceful precincts of the Cathedral it was renewed with redoubled force, making such an uproar that the young rooks quitted their nests in the ancient elms in apparent fear and tribulation, and drew forth an army of jackdaws from the roof of Old Trinity, so that what with the shouting below and croaking above, there was such a medley of discordant sounds as to disturb the propriety of the place. The old porter at the gate gazed with astonishment and terror on the motley group, and would, had he dared, have forbidden entrance; whilst the band of youthful choristers, going in their white robes from their school-room to the Cathedral, stopped in their course, and seeing so many of their play-fellows, returned the compliment of the cheering by cheering also, much to the displeasure of their master, a sour-crout pedagogue.

As the procession approached the Deanery, two countenances at the window were the "observed of all observers." The first was that of a man, of long features, naturally harsh, but lighted up by a smile which seemed to say that he was rather pleased than offended at being disturbed in his morning slumber. The second face was that of a female, of singular beauty and vivacity, who appeared delighted with what she witnessed, and in the fulness of her heart waved her handkerchief.

This was not lost upon our captain, who commanded a halt, and then called for three cheers for "Lady Nelly;" and three hearty good cheers were given, and on the procession moved, until it reached the principal entrance to the Cathedral.

He who had hitherto closed the procession, now dismounting, placed himself in the van, and, in company with Alderman Buskin and other citizens, boldly entered the church, followed by the children. Such a trampling with little feet "the long drawn aisle and fretted vault" had never known, and strange were the echoes of the trampling.

Upon reaching the door of the choir, Will and his friends

stopped, and he ordered the children to take their seats, which they did, and he was about to follow, when he found himself confronted by Prebendary Kenn, arrayed in full canonicals. Will bowed with reverence, for he knew the good old man, and, in spite of his own loose morality, could not but respect one who had the courage to deny the king an unfair request.

"How now? how now?" said the author of the *Evening Hymn*, "Is this you, Master Foster, that would turn the temple of the Most High into a playhouse."

"Never, your reverence," ejaculated our hero. "I am come here not in fun, but in earnest:" and, bowing his head to the altar, added "I know where I am."

"I hope so—I hope so! but what means this rabble route?"

"Is not this, your reverence, the Restoration Day? twenty-three years agone, when the Church was lifted out of the dung, to be a joyful mother to her children:" and then went on to state that having breakfasted the children, he brought them to church, that, on this glorious festival, there they might learn their duty to God and their king. "I've done my duty, Master Parson, and I am sure you will do yours."

"I'll try, I'll try, heaven direct me!" and in they went.

The service commenced, Dr. Kenn performed the principal portion, and at its conclusion ascended the pulpit, where instead of preaching the sermon he had prepared, he contented himself with a plain and feeling address to the youthful members of his congregation. He dwelt strongly upon the duty of obedience, on the beauty of order, and on the blessings of peace. Obedience must be rendered not only to parents and teachers, but to all who are placed in authority over us: the highest of whom was the king, the anointed of the Lord, and His vice-regent upon earth; and then went on to enforce the doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience, expatiating freely on the judgments which had been showered down upon England for having shed the blood of him who was her king and governor.

It would be too much to say that the doctrines laid down by the worthy divine were beyond criticism, or his conclusions reconcileable with modern impressions, but of this all may be assured, that what he said were the outpourings of an honest heart—his spotless life and his subsequent career being the best proofs thereof.

The party mustered in the nave—and having fallen in, marched from the Church to the Close, were ranged in successive lines in front of the Deanery; and, upon a signal given by Will, the boys sent their glad voices far on high; and three hearty shouts follow in quick succession, and now the chorister lads, who had joined the company, sing a portion of Purcell's anthem. The gates of the Deanery open, and out rush three or four little spaniels, barking and frisking in the warmed sunshine, to whom succeeds with steady step the same gentleman, a glimpse of whose countenance was caught an hour before, but with an improved appearance; the marks of age and dissipation are but faintly visible. It is the royal Charles—the merry monarch—the pleasure-loving king—and always best pleased when all are pleased about him. With a firm step and smiling countenance he advanced on the green; every tongue was still, every head uncovered, and every knee was bent, and England's king stood in a world of little subjects and youthful admirers—

> "Bright as the sun his eyes the gazers strike,
> And like the sun they shine on all alike."

"Rise, my friends, and welcome to you," speaks the people's king, "you do honour to our birthday, and homage to our Restoration. I accept it—and will ne'er forget it!" and then turning to Alderman Buskin, who, after a succession of bows and cringes, had managed to get within a few steps of his sovereign, and whose face was redder than ever, "Who have I to thank first for this kind compliment?"

The condescension was overpowering, the Alderman was almost dumbfoundered, his face waxed redder and redder, and at length, "My gracious Sire——" but his tongue refused further utterance.

"Courage, man," replied the king, with a gracious smile, "we will wait your time."

But if his Majesty had patience the boys had none; "Will Foster"—"Master Foster"—"Black Will"—"The Blackamoor," issued from a hundred tongues.

"Ha—ha—ha," exclaimed Charles, "what! odd's fish! my Boscobel lad, Foster! where are you?"

Within a minute Will was surrounded by a score of boys, and by them led captive to the presence of his sovereign.

Will's countenance did not display its usual audacity, and,

for the first time in his life, he had some emotions of fear, and thought he had carried his joke too far; but the good-natured smile from his late offended master dissipated his fears, and he soon regained his wonted confidence. The King was evidently pleased, surveyed the man before him, and then relieved himself by a hearty laugh.

"If our wits had been as much awake as our body, they would have told us that none but you would have thought of this. By my soul a pretty fellow—and you will become almost as famous as Jack Dryden. But what trick, Foster, have you now in hand? Fun and mischief we know are ever at your tongue's tip and fingers' ends; but this puzzles our discernment."

"Please your Majesty I have had little to do with tricks and scheming since you got safe from the priest's hole in Mosely Hall, and you were hid in the Boscobel oak, and I was your Majesty's watch-dog till now, having lost your royal favour, was anxious to regain it—I do think I deserve it."

"How now, varlet?" said the king in seeming anger.

But Will had fully surmounted all vestiges of timidity, and proceeds—

"Parson Kenn—and there he is"—pointing to the worthy divine, who had also joined in the courtly attendance, to see what would be the end of that day's strange proceedings—"says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go;' and I think so too; and this being your Majesty's birthday, and blessed and glorious Restoration, I have enrolled more than three hundred young citizens in your Majesty's royal cause; and there they are, all wearing an oak apple, as an outward and visible sign that they are all sound at core; and in that matter ask Parson Kenn, who told them in the big church their duty to your Majesty's royal person, government, and family."

The King turned to the preacher, and entered into conversation with him, but Will went on, "Three hundred, little in size, but tough in heart, make capital soldiers bye-and-bye, and woe betide your Majesty's enemies then." And then, addressing them—

"Ain't you, all of you, ready to fight for and die for your gracious, good, and loving King?" and then the boys began shouting that they were all good men and true, and that they would kill, shoot, drown, and stone to death, any and all of his Majesty's enemies; and then they shouted again and

again, obliging the young rooks to take another turn, who in their turn again called out the army of jackdaws, and again was aerial discord mingled with the sounds below.

The King, having finished his conversation, advanced and said "Foster, you are, as I always thought you to be, a loyal man—warmly, very warmly attached to our person and Government: and you, for this, shall have our recompense—bye-gones are bye-gones, save Boscobel Wood." And, turning to his courtiers, "These young citizens have come forth to do us honour, and must not be sent empty away; and see that they are provided for. Our servant has found them a breakfast, and we will provide them a dinner—aye, in this very place, under the shade of these trees. I do not see an oak—I would there were, for our servant's sake."

Some hours later the boys were regaled in the Close with as good a dinner as could be hastily provided; and our friend Alderman Buskin, at the special command of the King, acted as president, and happy were the old and young. Dr. Kenn said the grace. In the afternoon there were diversions of all kinds, which were witnessed by the King and several of his courtiers. His Majesty appeared warmly interested in the youthful sports, commended the agility of one lad, the swiftness of another, the daring of another, and strength of another; and with his own royal hand distributed prizes.

Nor was our hero forgotten. He had the pleasure to wait upon his Majesty that afternoon, and was restored to full favour and employment, and on the third day afterwards Mistress Foster eat and drank in the King's kitchen.

CHAPTER III.

THE KING MADE A FREEMAN OF THE CITY.

"And haughtily the trumpet sounds, and gaily dance the bells,
As slowly labouring in the wind, the royal blazon swells."

MACAULAY.

THE twenty-fourth of June was another busy day in the old city, and from the first peep of the sun, when he rose over the spreading oaks of Hampage in the north-east, till he sunk

beneath the lofty beeches of Crabwood in the north-west, there was an almost incessant clamour with the church bells. There was round ringing and firing, major bobs and triple bobs; and towards eventide these were strangely intermingled, as if either the bells or their ringers had partaken too freely of the hogsheads of strong beer which that day had been rolled into the streets and broached, in order to quench the thirst, or stimulate the loyalty of the citizens. The ringers had their work cut out, and more then they could do, and others were therefore engaged from the villages of Twyford and Sparsholt.

Again the royal standard floated over the Westgate, and the St. George's cross on the other gates of the city; and again were the fronts of the houses of the High-street profusely decorated, but not so much with branches of the oak as with flowers of all kinds; and it would appear that every garden and hedge for miles round had been ransacked, for the purpose of forming devices in never-ending variety of colours. There was to be seen the royal crown between the letters "C. R.," then the word "Charles," then "Welcome," "The Lord's Anointed," and others quite as flattering.

Again the sun shone brightly, and gave his approving rays to the day's proceedings. Not a cloud to be seen—no whity streaks, or towers or rocks, on high—but one clear arch of azure blue.

As above so below, there was a smile on every countenance—such an expansion of brows, such glistening of eyes, such bedecking of the person, for the old rivalled the young in the gayness of their apparel, and coffers flew open to send forth their treasured contents, proclaiming a general holiday; and well there might be, for England's King was that day to be enrolled as citizen and freeman of the most loyal, as well as the most ancient, city in his dominions.

"Time enough always proves time little enough;" and so it was at St. John's House, for although the sun had almost attained its zenith, at which hour his Majesty was expected, the work of preparation had not been completed.

The building at that time resembled an aged and decayed beau—

> "His youthful hose, well sav'd, a world too wide
> For his shrunk shank."

A mere epitome of its former self—a thing of yesterday—a relic of days which were gone: the walls exhibiting deep fissures, through which the rain and wind found their way;

the roof of undulating form, and half-covered with moss and cingreen. Here and there were windows, showing in their outline choice specimens of the architecture of the reign of our English Longshanks, but repaired in the worst possible taste; and then others of a mongrel kind, neither Gothic nor Grecian, of bad design and worse execution.

Seven hundred years previous to our tale St. Brinstan, Bishop of Winchester, founded a hospital on the spot, the nature of which is unknown, but which, in the reign of King Stephen, was destroyed by fire. The site next became the property of the newly-established order of Knights' Templars, who erected a preceptory on it, with residences for decayed and wounded brethren, with a chapel attached, dedicated to the patron of the order of "Saint John the Baptist"—hence the origin of the name, by which the house as well as the chapel has ever since been known. In the reign of Edward II. the order was suppressed, and all that belonged to it confiscated to the King's use; when John Devenish, a wealthy citizen, obtained permission of the King to found within the late preceptory a hospital for the relief of sick and lame poor soldiers and necessitated way-faring men; and also for a chaplain, who was not only to attend to the spiritual wants of the living, but to offer masses for the repose of the soul of the founder. This requirement of requiem masses for the dead proved fatal to his good intentions, as within two centuries it brought his foundation within the provisions of the Act for the suppression of superstitious uses, and its revenues were again confiscated to the King's use.

Twenty years later another charitable citizen, Ralph Lamb, is found, to re-establish the hospital, but with a scanty provision for six poor widows, and the Corporation are the conservators, but badly do they deserve the name; the trust is treated as the unfaithful servant did his talent, whilst the building is allowed to become more and more decayed.

Rubbing and scrubbing were now over; mops, brushes, brooms, and buckets had done their work, and had taken their departure in company with the wives and daughters of the town sergeants. The late dirt-encrusted steps and dingy floors are now bright and clean, rivalling a Dutch dairy, and there is a freshness and wholesomeness in the old building which it had not known for many a long year before. But there is still bustle, bustle, bustle, under the pervading eye of

the Town Clerk, one Master Timothy Fidge; and there in the centre of the principal room he stands, fuming, and fretting, and chatting by turns, and that in quick succession; and then the tones of his voice as quickly alternate from a doleful *miserere* to a boisterous *jubilate*. A little thin man, clear blue eyes, a pleasing countenance, yet clearly marked with indecision, with a bald pate, down which the perspiration steamed freely, for he was agitated—greatly agitated, fearful that something would be omitted, or that somebody would have something to say, yet every five minutes forgetting the business in hand, and talking of matters in no way relating to it.

He now resembles an old hen in the midst of a well-employed brood of chicken. His eye glances round the room, staying one moment to admire this, the pleasure of which he shows by the rubbing of his hands; and then, pausing at something not quite to his fancy, displaying his disapproval by the uplifting of his hands and the spreading out of his fingers.

"I say, Master Town Clerk, don't this fit? and aint this the very thing to please your learnedship, and the King's majesty?"

So spoke Will Curley, head gardener to the Bishop, but now perched upon a ladder, having just finished a device and festoon of flowers and evergreens, in which a crown and the letters "C. R." were conspicuous.

"Right well, Curley, right well; most excellently; I am sure his majesty will be pleased, and who knows but he may make you his head-gardener? Thy chance is worth a trifle," said the functionary, who chuckled at his own suggestion; and rubbing his hands with apparent satisfaction, went on:—"I commend your fancy, Curley. Were I king, you should have a pension. But, now, we must compliment his Royal Highness, or the poor town clerk will, as he always does, get into trouble. Now, what device shall it be?" And, then, pausing and gently upraising his hands proceeded:—"Yes, I have it, 'J. D.,' Jacobus Dux, both Latin, Curley; like Carolus Rex; 'Jacobus,' James; 'Dux,' Duke, from the verb *duco*—'I lead.' You understand, Curley." Curley did not understand, and stared with astonishment, "But what instead of the crown?"

The gardener descends the ladder, and approaches the Town Clerk, but not till he had given a wink to Mike Ruddle, as much as to say there is mischief in the wind, and then with a demure countenance began—

"The crown for the King, Master Town Clerk, must be all right, but what for the Duke ain't so easy to say; your learnedship ought to know, you be such a mighty reader of books; but I think I know what would please his highness."

"To be sure you do, Curley. I shall come and see you when you are in the royal gardens; perhaps you will be a knight; think of Sir William Curley—ha! ha! ha!" answered the functionary, rubbing his hands with evident relish, "What is it, Curley? what is it? I confide in your taste."

The gardener looks even more grave than before. "Humph, the letters 'J. D.,' and then a cross between, or rather above them, the Duke will take it as a great compliment; for you, Mr. Town Clerk, know his Highness to be a Papist, and all the Papists do think so much of a cross."

Now there is an uplifting of the hands and stretching open the fingers, and a stalking up and down the room, as if all the tribulation in the world was the portion of the Winchester Town Clerk.

Curley still looks grave, not a muscle is disturbed; but Mike Ruddle is biting his lips with much energy, in order to prevent a hearty laugh; Tom Scantley, another sergeant, is apparently wiping, and thus hiding, his face; whilst Frank Thorp, another of them, has withdrawn to a window, and is looking into the street for the like purpose.

"There now; there now! was there ever a poor fellow so bothered as I am? Job never was a Town Clerk. We shall all be sent to prison; and Dr. Oates and Master Dangerfield will come down and swear away our lives. It won't do, Curley; it won't do."

"Master Town Clerk," quietly rejoined the other, "I don't know about that. I ben't a scholar like you; I don't read books or news-letters; but I thought it would do your learnedship a good turn with his Highness—and, to my mind, he would take it kindly."

"And we be hanged, or sent to the Tower, or to Newgate. Ah! there is our good neighbour, Sir Harry Tichbourne; a more loyal subject there can't be, and how long was he in the Tower. If we were to set up Papist crosses, we should have the house about our ears, and the poor Town Clerk would have all the blame. Oh, dear me, I can't endure it." And then there was another uplifting of the hands and stretching out of the fingers, as if the digits would part company, when Alderman Buskin entered the room.

There is now a calm, as if oil had been poured upon the troubled waters, and smiles radiate on the countenance of the Town Clerk, and all his fears and troubles are forgotten.

The greeting of the two worthies was cordial, for they had long been friends and neighbours. The Alderman kindly inquired for Mrs. Fidge and the young family; and the Town Clerk was equally kind in his inquiries as to the health of the Alderman's lady, and his charming niece, Alice Greenly, whom he declared to be the very flower of Winchester *ne plus ultra*.

This pleased the Alderman, who was not a little fond and proud of his neice, whom he had reared from her cradle, and who had repaid his care and kindness by warm affection and obedience; and, therefore, he listened patiently to the innocent prattle of his friend on her good looks and gentle disposition. "Ah, friend," he said, when he had a chance of reply, "Alice is a good girl—a kind soul—and she never forgets a kindness, or a friend; and here, Mr. Town Clerk, what say you to this?" raising his left hand, and showing a fine damask rose three-parts blown, "What say you to this?"

"A real beauty; not to be matched in our city within ten miles round; and I'll wager that Lady Russell, with all her gay flowers at Micheldever, can't match it. Oh, it is a beauty!"

"Then take it; it is your's, sent you by Alice, who knowing I was coming down, and should meet you, went into the garden, and with her own hand cut the best flower she could find, and bid me present it with her duty to her kind and good friend the Town Clerk."

"Did she? bless her little heart; as good as she is charming!" The functionary took the flower, raised it to his lips, and feasted his eyes upon its opening beauties, and, behold, there were drops of moisture upon it. He was a happy Town Clerk, and Curley's intended cross, like all other crosses, had dissolved in air.

The gift was carefully deposited till the learned gentleman should don his official robes, and in the meantime he and his friend paced the room in familiar and interesting chat, every now and then pausing to confront each other, which was always attended with a rubbing of the hands, and a glistening of the eyes; but all thought of the decoration of the place had passed out of his mind. But not so with the others, for Curley and the sergeants went on with their work all the pleasanter from non-interference. The former had had his

joke, and was satisfied—the proposed cross was but a crossing of his mind to nettle the fidgetty overlooker, and had its intended effect. The letters "J. D." soon appeared in flaming colours, and between was an anchor equally showy, an appropriate compliment to the royal duke, as the Lord High Admiral. Banners were likewise suspended round the room, and the work was complete when Hugh Boorley, the fourth sergeant, made his appearance, bringing a letter from the Mayor, which he gave to the Town Clerk.

A glance at the contents was sufficient to give a considerable elongation to his countenance, the white of his eyes becoming more than usually apparent, followed by an uplifting of the hands and stretching out of the fingers, accompanied by an uneasiness through his whole frame. The letter is handed to and read by the Alderman, whose sensibility being more obtuse, and being of a lethargic temperament, and who always acted upon the principle that "a still tongue commits no treason," gave no other vent to his feelings, whatever they might have been, than a very grave look, a shake of the head, and the words "Very unfortunate!"

"Very insulting, Mr. Alderman, I say; and very provoking, after all my trouble, morning, noon, and night. Here have I carried out to the letter, *ad literam* I say, the wishes of the Court of Aldermen, and now comes the Mayor and upsets all that I have done. Oh, dear! oh, dear! Job never was a Town Clerk."

And now for the letter. It contained a requirement from the legal adviser to the Corporation to set aside for his Worship twenty seats, in addition to those which had already been allotted to him, and with which he had expressed himself satisfied. The present demand, if complied with, would be attended with great inconvenience, and would deprive the Aldermen of some of the seats allotted to their families; but what was that to his Worship? he had invited those whom he esteemed more than his brethren, and his brethren must give way.

The Town Clerk now paced the room in a state of the most nervous excitement, during which there was an involuntary uplifting of the hands and stretching the fingers, many times repeated; whilst old Buskin had seated himself in a corner, and was musing upon what he could say to cool the anger and disappointment of Mistress Buskin, who had purposed being present on the grand occasion, and whom he well knew would

expect a foremost place—when the company received an addition in the person of Alderman Foreright, *alias* "Jack Foreright," *alias* "Old Jack," the father of the Corporation, of which he had been a member more than forty years. He was now near threescore and ten, yet as active in body and as buoyant in spirit as many a stripling at twenty. Short in stature, and of a square Dutch form, save an elongated head, on which the phrenological organs of veneration, firmness, and wit were strongly developed; whilst those of caution and secretiveness were unusually small; a bald pate, shaggy eyebrows, now almost the colour of drifted snow, under which were a pair of clear and sparkling blue eyes, which at times would show forth with an intensity as if ready to start from their sockets. He was of an old Winchester family, of so long standing that he was related nearly, or distantly, to half the inhabitants of the city. By family interest he was, when scarcely out of his teens, admitted into the Corporation, and elected one of "the four-and-twenty discreet men" who were to assist the Mayor. Discreet he never was, though not otherwise wanting in judgment—

> "Some have their share of wit,
> But want as much again to manage it."

Whilst the youngest member he was the most unmanageable, would not submit to dictation, and was proof against cajolery. He had strong prejudices, as is the wont with home-keeping youths; professed to know little, and care for nothing, beyond the limits of his native place, and all who resided beyond it he regarded as strangers, of whom he was ever suspicious. He was an ardent loyalist, and his attachment to the throne, perhaps, owed its source to early education, and having read that the first King of England was crowned in Winchester. He was a firm supporter of the Church, rather from old associations, and an intense hatred of innovation, than from fair reason for the faith that was in him. He had a great reverence for Charles the First's warrant, allowing pastimes on Sundays, because he remembered, as a mere child, when it was first proclaimed; and enhanced by its having given mortal offence to the Puritans, whom he always held in abhorrence; and from the same cause, he was a warm defender of the customs of bull-baiting and cock-fighting, though it was not his fancy to attend either the one or the other. On several occasions he had rendered good services to the city, and had he the saving

knowledge to retain, as he had the energy to win, he would have been the demagogue of the place; but it was not in him.

When Charles I. was being conveyed from his prison at Hurst castle, through Winchester to Windsor, a short time previous to his trial, the Mayor and Corporation waited upon his Majesty with an address of condolence; and, when his worship, overcome by his feelings, faltered in the reading thereof, Foreright, young as he then was, snatched the paper from the trembling hands of the Mayor, and read its contents with a firm and audible voice concluding with "God save the King, and confusion to his enemies," poured forth with fiery energy, and a most menacing tone to the surrounding soldiery. Then twenty years later, when the plague made such fearful devastations in Winchester, and which within two months deprived him of wife, sons, brothers, and kinsmen, leaving him the sole inheritor of the ancient and once familiar name of Foreright, his time and purse were at the full service of his suffering fellow-citizens. As the phœnix is said to rise with redoubled splendour from its ashes, so this heavily-stricken man showed with mighty force the kind and generous feelings of his heart—

"No dangers fright him, and no labours tire."

His services were not unrecognised or forgotten, for when the pestilence had abated, he was unanimously called to the civic chair, an honour which he declined. And although he had wept with those who wept, he could not rejoice with those who rejoiced, for he had no wife, nor sons, nor brothers, nor kinsmen, to share his smiles and partake his honours—there was no perspective — he was a solitary man — bruised, but not broken.

Twice seven years have run their course, and the old city is again the seat of loyalty. A Stuart fills the throne, who prefers pleasure to state; and, leaving rival parties to fight out their battles, seeks retirement and quiet in a provincial town. But in the train of loyalty came Gallic fashions and modes, royal courtesans and profligate courtiers. Foreright is well pleased with the former, but all the latter are sources of annoyance, revolting to his spirit as an Englishman. He is not of the sort that bridle their tongues, and he pours fourth his disapprobation, in season and out of season, for he is a vessel that carries no ballast. Formerly he prided himself in being

arrayed as a Cavalier, anything opposed to the formality of the Puritans; but now his dislike of French introduction is such that his outward appearance approaches that of a Roundhead, and even his principles have been somewhat modified. When, to be an avowed royalist, and a defender of the divine rights of kings exposed a man to obloquy and danger, Foreright ever stood prominently as such; but now, when all are loyal subservient subjects, flatterers, admirers, and imitators of royal vices, his soul takes fire, and he sometimes feels half inclined to join the country party. He now enters the room humming, out of all time and tune, the burthen of an old war-song: then stops to look at the decorations; then there is a twist of the nose, which might be interpreted to mean "trumpery:" and now, approaching the Town Clerk, whom he saluted with a friendly tap on the shoulder—

"Ha, Tim, you have given us a kind of mock Paradise; and, by my soul, you look as sad as Mother Eve, when she received notice to quit."

The Town Clerk worked hard to put on a smile, but it was labour in vain. He rubbed his hands, but yet they hardly touched each other, there was no affinity in them.

"What ails thee, man? thou art in the dumps; but it don't take much to put you there. You are a capital hand to find out a trouble, visible or invisible. What ails thee?"

The Town Clerk had a heart too full to speak, and quietly handed the other the mayor's letter.

The Alderman drew from his pocket a pair of spectacles, set in a strong frame of brass, and having carefully wiped them with a piece of chamois leather, placed them on his nose, and read with deliberation; and then there was a chuckle; a twisting of the nose, which upheaved the spectacles from their resting place; a sudden jerk, as if the elbows were about to meet behind; a triumphant look, now at the Town Clerk and then at Alderman Buskin, who had left his corner and come forward; and then—

"Humph, humph: no more than I thought: 'fools gets fool's measure.' I am glad of it."

"Fie, brother," interposed Buskin, in the blandest tone; "I don't think this is a matter for rejoicing."

"But I do!" replied the other fiercely; and then moderating his voice, "But as you put the nettle into your bed, you can have nothing to say against the sting; you have made a rod for your own back; you wouldn't listen to me; you would

have your own way, fawning, sneaking, cringing to strangers, and now you have caught a Tartar."

"You are always too hard, neighbour. I am sure his worship is a well-spoken gentleman of honest fame, and wealthy withal."

"A purse-proud fool, a puffed upstart; one drunk, not with liquor, but with luck and flattery; you have so bowed and scraped to him, fussed for him, catered to his fancies, that you have turned his brain; and he fancies himself as great a man as the grand monarch across the water. I almost pity him; I do, I do."

"Just like you, neighbour, always on the find fault; I love peace and quiet."

"And your love of them frights them away; and there's Tim, just of the same kidney; can't say your soul's your own. Now you are pining in your soul that my lord wants to take away your seats, and you have neither of you the pluck to say 'No! out with you; I would sooner die a bull-dog than like a cur.' He won't disappoint any of mine, for I have none to bring. To be sure, my grand-boys, Walter and Philip Newbolt, wanted to come, but I thought it was no place for children, so I promised them a gooseberry-fool; and this morning, to keep them in humour, I picked the gooseberries myself, and shall share their mess in the evening; and I warrant there will not be a merrier trio in the whole city. But as to this turning out; I say it shan't be."

"I take it to have been an oversight of his Worship," ventured the Town Clerk, "Perchance he has forgotten the order; let us hope so, he shall have the benefit of my doubt. He is the head of the body corporate, and it is not meet that the limbs should rise in mutiny against the head; especially when his most sacred Majesty and royal brother are about to accept the freedom of our poor city, and to be enrolled as citizens; so I think and speak as a pure friend of the city; and as adviser to the Chamber, it would be wise to give way, and who knows what grandees his worship may have invited? and thus save all unpleasant brawling in the presence of the King's Majesty and his illustrious Court, which I do truly pray for."

Thus pleaded the lawyer, who found a ready seconder in old Buskin, for the sake of peace and quiet, and supporters in two other aldermen, who had just entered the room.

But Foreright was not the man to give way. He was in the

element he dearly loved—opposition, and was determined to maintain his position.

"Well, gentlemen, do as you please; I shall assert my right, whatever be the end; if it be only to show the King there is one real freeman in the Corporation who knows his rights, and has courage to uphold them;" and then turning to the functionary, "Now, Tim—Mr. Town Clerk, I should say—please to read the minutes of our last court; here is the book, and here is the page, and so please to read."

The Town Clerk felt that he was called on to perform an unpleasant task, from which he wished to shrink, and appealed to the other aldermen by look, though not by word, whether he should do as he was bid, but could gain no reply. He sought to avoid the keen glance of Foreright, but failed, and next attempted an excuse, but could not find words wherein to clothe it.

"Come, Mr. Town Clerk, you know your duty; read the minutes;" and he did read. "'City of Winchester—At a meeting of the Court of Aldermen, holden on Wednesday, the 12th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1683, the Worshipful the Mayor presiding thereat, it was resolved, and agreed, and ordained, that a meeting of the whole body of the Corporation is to be holden on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed John the Baptist, at which Court the freedom of the city is to be conferred on his most gracious Majesty, his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and the most noble Henry, Earl of Rochester; that seats be placed in the great Hall for the accommodation of the illustrious and other visitors; and that of these seats, forty shall be awarded to the King's use, to be disposed of at the discretion of the Lord Chamberlain; twelve to the Mayor, for the comfort and satisfaction of his personal friends; and three to each of the aldermen and the Town Clerk for a like purpose.'"

The Town Clerk now paused, shut the book, and pushed it away from him as if it were a cup containing a deadly poison; but he dared not raise his eyes for fear of encountering the gaze of Foreright.

"Humph, not quite all, Mr. Town Clerk; please to open the book again, and give us the finish of it."

Buskin here interposed, declaring that his friend had read the entire entry, an assertion which was acquiesced in by the two other aldermen.

Foreright smiles, bows in turn to each, and then goes on—

"Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Town Clerk, but I must request you to turn again to the book."

The functionary again looks for assistance from the other aldermen, and can find none; and again opens the book in the right place, without presuming to read.

"That's the order, is it not?" enquired Foreright, placing a finger on a certain entry.

"It is," replied the lawyer.

"And this?" continued the other, moving his finger an inch lower down the page—

"The mayor's signature."

"Read, read, man."

"'Pharaoh Ledger, Mayor.'"

"That will do," exclaims Foreright, with a chuckle, "You may shut the book. There is the agreement in the mayor's hand, and he shan't run from it, or I am no alderman of Winchester;" and, turning to the other aldermen, "Are we nobodies? and has his worship a right to undo out of court what he agreed to do in court? What say you?"

The two looked grave, but neither vouchsafed an answer.

"You know we have right on our side, and I'll maintain it; I'll bell the cat, though I may get a bite and a scratch; I'm senior alderman, and have the right to the first choice. And now, Mr. Town Clerk, which are the seats of which we are to have the disposal?"

Whilst the party were engaged in surveying the seats, and making their remarks thereon, several ladies entered the room, among whom were Mistress Buskin and Alice Greenly, whom the Town Clerk did not forget to thank for her remembrance of an old friend; whilst Buskin played the amiable to his spouse, expressing his determination to seat her where she would at once see and be seen by all.

The Alderman's lady was a comely dame; lively, chatty, kind-hearted, and ever ready to do a kind service—had worked hard in her time, been very frugal—and deserved her present good fortune, for Buskin was a man of property; but she was vain—very vain—and imagined, if she was not so young, she was quite as pretty, as she was thirty years before. She tried to enact the fine lady, and to talk fashionably, but would every now and then show, in spite of herself, the lowliness of her origin, and her total want of what is called education. "Fine feathers make fine birds" was what she thought a truth, and acted upon it; and here was she, the child of dishonour,

reared by charity, and who commenced life with the most menial service, rivalling highborn dames in the richness, nay sumptuousness, of her apparel, in which nothing was too costly and nothing too glaring. The numerous rows of pearls strangely contrasted with the strong lines which showed themselves on her uncovered neck and arms.

Alice was arrayed in a far more modest attire than her aunt, and it would seem that the over-fondness of the one for gay apparel had caused a surfeit in the other. She was now seventeen years of age, having been born during the time when the Plague was at its full height, and which deprived her of father and mother, and placed her under the gentle care of Buskin, the brother of the latter. The little orphan was tenderly reared and carefully educated by her adopted parents, and with love and gratitude she repaid the kindness. To her uncle she was devotedly attached—to him she confided all her little secrets; whilst to him she was all in all—the very apple of his eye; the only object in which there was no selfishness. Her love to her aunt was blended with fear, but why, she could not tell, but so it was. A fresh blooming lass, fair complexion, light brown hair, hazel eyes, short in stature, and delicate in form, yet bearing the marks of good health in her sparkling eye, clear skin, and active step. Fair, gentle, and modest, she was the idol of her guardian, the flower of the city, and the admired of many.

The quarter-jacks had had their full swing, and the octave of Old Trinity sent forth twelve booming sounds, proclaiming the mid-day hour, when into the hall poured well-dressed dames and damsels, accompanied by members of the Corporation, where the Aldermen were still at issue with respect to the Mayor's request.

"I may have been a little hasty in my speech," says Foreright, "but I am right—you know I am right—our book tells me I am right, and I will maintain the right; but not an inch more than is necessary to show that I am right. For my lord, I would not budge the parson's share of a barley-corn; but for our fair visitors I'll do what I can. Three seats are mine—aye, and the three first, but only one will I claim; but do as *you* please."

Here he broke off and went towards the ladies, made his bow and passed the time of day to Mistress Buskin; and then accosted Alice, to whom he was well known, and gently invited her to accept the first seat. The maiden blushed, and

would have declined the kind offer ; but the old boy was too much in earnest to allow her ; and, after a little coying, triumphantly conducted her to the post of honour.

Mrs. Buskin and two friends followed close behind ; and old Buskin, who strained a point, was there also, anxious that his wife should have the second seat, and thus save him from a curtain lecture.

"Men are but children of a larger growth" says somebody, and "follow the leader" is as much in fashion with aldermen as with children and baa-lambs ; and those who, ten minutes before, were willing to pocket an insult, and quietly forego their just claims, were now ready to set them up, because they had been won for them in spite of themselves. But their champion was one who, having moderated his own claim, insisted that they should do the like as far as possible. The stronger mind rules the roost, and so it was.

Foreright was pleased, and turning to his brother aldermen :

"We have settled the point ; and, now, to put a seal upon it, to prevent its being disturbed—some trusty guard—some sturdy, honest fellow : ha ! who have we here ? As honest a lad as you or I know—Maurice Kalendar—very industrious ; aye, and what's more, very kind to his poor old bed-ridden mother. Here, Maurice !" beckoning to one of the four city constables, a young man of two-and-twenty, who had recently commenced business as a blacksmith, with what was called the "city-money," being a gratuitous loan, under the will of Sir Thomas White, for the payment of which Foreright was a guarantee.

The call was obeyed, and the young locksmith stood before his patron.

"First, boy, how's mother ?"

"Heart-whole, thank you, Sir—truly cheerful : the more the wonder, as she suffers so much in her limbs, besides her blindness."

"Poor old soul ! tell her I will come down and see her bye and bye, but now there is something else to do. Now, you stand here with your staff," placing the constable near where Alice was seated ; "And mind you, no one is to pass or disturb the ladies. St. Maurice was a famous soldier, as I have read ; I don't know that you will have any fighting, but you must keep a strict guard—gentle or simple must be the same to you, Maurice ;" and then with a chuckle the Alderman retired and joined his fellows.

In the meantime the Town Clerk was busily engaged in finding accommodation for numerous strangers, many of whom brought letters from the Mayor. The task was at last completed to the satisfaction of his learnedship, who was rubbing his hands with evident glee, when he received a summons to attend his Worship in the inner chamber—and in he went.

The inner chamber, or coffer room, was a gloomy apartment, dimly lighted by two windows of small dimensions, filled with fragments of stained glass, apparently placed in at random. The room was in part lined with tapestry, but so old, ragged, and faded, that it was impossible to discover the subjects intended to be represented. The furniture consisted of a strong clumsy oak table, a few antique chairs, two oak benches, the like of which may sometimes be seen in old churches; a huge coffer, or chest, iron-bound, which contained the maces and ancient muniments; and against one side of the room was a series of long narrow cupboards, each appropriated to a civic officer, and containing his robe or gown. Beside these, and on the wall opposite the two windows, there hung a large mirror, before which stood a man half-way between fifty and sixty, surveying his person and dress with evident delight and admiration. He is somewhat above the average height, and of well-proportioned form. His countenance exhibits unusual placidity, as if the feelings of hope or fear, love or hate, expectation or disappointment, had in the course of more than half a century never been allowed to have had fair play; but with a strong mind, and a stronger purpose, had been, if not quite subdued, kept under strong control. The cranium proclaimed self-esteem to be immense—firmness, huge—secretiveness, vast—and acquisitiveness and caution, large; whilst benevolence, veneration, and conscientiousness were remarkably diminutive. It is the Mayor, dressed in the full height of the fantastic fashion of the day. The head is surmounted with a monstrous peruke, the curls of which, resembling the trails of snakes, reach below his shoulders. A short waist-doublet, flashed with many coloured silks, petticoat breeches, which tied at the knees, but with flounces which reached to the calves.

The Town Clerk enters the room, and makes his obedience to the local dignitary, who returns the compliment by a slight inclination of the head, and a smile, if a smirk can deserve that title.

"Are the Corporators assembled ? if so, why are they not ready to attend me—ere long his Majesty will be here." The Town Clerk was about to leave the room, when his worship enquired, "Are my friends accommodated, even as I desired, and my commands—requests complied with ?"

The other hesitated—he was flattered—and there was an uneasy sensation in his hands which extended to the very tips of his fingers. He stammered—he wished to put a good face on the business, bnt he could not, and therefore said that he did not mean to say that his worship's request had been entirely thrown on one side through the pertinacity of Foreright.

A slight yet transitory flash of anger appears on the ever-placid countenance, and then there is the accustomed smirk or smile, accompanied by a triumphant toss of the head.

The Aldermen and Bailiffs, followed by the sergeants, now enter ; the latter go to the coffer to obtain the maces, and the former to their respective cupboards for their robes, with which they speedily array themselves.

"Gentlemen," said the mayor, addressing the aldermen, and bowing very formally, "I hope the arrangements are to your satisfaction, and all your friends accommodated."

"Right comfortably, your worship," responded Alderman Buskin, bowing obsequiously.

"Reptile !" growled another alderman, but in so low a tone that the words were heard only by Francis Cradock, the senior bailiff. The approaching ceremony was the staple of conversation, till the Mayor said, in a tone of authority, in which a dash of condescension was attempted to be thrown, that the time had arrived for the opening of the court.

In the meantime, something had occurred in the Hall which threatened to mar the harmony and disturb the pleasure of the occasion. The aldermen had hardly withdrawn, when a young gallant, with haughty bearing, arrived from the Court with a letter, which he delivered to the officer in charge of the seats placed at the disposal of the Lord Chamberlain. He then sauntered up and down the Hall, amusing himself by surveying the devices and other ornaments, of which his opinion was expressed by a curling of the upper lip. He next took a survey of the faces and dresses of the wives and daughters of the citizens, and especially directing his eyes on Alice, and that so fiercely and so lewdly as to oblige her to avoid the gaze by directing her own to the ground.

He next approached her with the intent of seating himself by her side, when Maurice, with a courteous, yet firm bearing, said:—"You cannot come here, my lord—yonder are the seats appointed for the nobility."

"No matter, fellow—I prefer this place to that—so let me pass."

"I cannot, my lord, I cannot, and will not disobey my orders."

"Insolent rascal, know you who I am?"

"My Lord Cornbury, son of the Earl of Clarendon, and nephew to His Royal Highness the Duke of York."

"Ha! and who are you?"

"Maurice Kalendar, locksmith of Silver-hill, and one of the city constables."

"And dare you, Mr. Constable, refuse a kinsman of the King."

"In the execution of my duty, I do—and will."

"Scoundrel, I will pass."

"You shall not, my lord, but with my life."

The young blood now attempted to force his way, but he found more than his match; and then had recourse to his sword, but, ere the steel glittered in the air, the constable had furnished his staff.

The ladies were in the greatest consternation—some were for rushing from the Hall—some screamed, and some were in a fainting state; but there was one brave heart, from whose sweet lips escaped the prayer—"God defend the right."

Just then the Corporation entered the Hall, and all was stayed; first the beadle and crier—the one strutting like a turkey-cock, and the other waddling like a duck; then the city constables, with their long staves, painted and gilded fantastically; then the town sergeants, of whom Mike Ruddle, who measured six feet four out of his shoes, and of stout and lusty frame, carried the little mace—a tiney thing which danced like a toy upon his broad shoulders, a sparrow upon the back of an elephant; followed by Tom Scantley and Frank Thorp, each carrying a mace of a larger size, and then Hugh Boorly, not five feet two, shoes and all, and old and crippled in the bargain, who carried the great big mace, under the weight of which he groaned and sweated. A genuine type of mankind: Hugh had many times been advised to content himself with the smaller one, but to that friendly advice he gave a deaf ear; he was the senior sergeant, and the big

mace was the insignia thereof, and the big mace he would carry. Then came the Mayor, in his scarlet robe and golden chain, with measured step and self-important air. His thumbs were skilfully placed in the loops of his robe, thus serving the double purpose of displaying his be-jewelled fingers and revealing the taste of his apparel, which would otherwise have been hidden. Immediately followed the aldermen, according to seniority; then the two bailiffs; and, lastly, our friend, the Town Clerk, rubbing his hands, smiling, and nodding, or bowing to the company, right and left, pleased in himself, and with all the world.

The Mayor and his brethren took their places; the court was opened in due form, and every member of the body corporate was called by name, when loud and hearty shouts in the street proclaimed the approach of the King and his company. Louder and louder grow the shouts; the door of the Hall is thrown open, and at the sides stand the bailiffs ready to conduct the King and Duke to their seats.

Without pomp, ceremony, or any other attendance than his own personal friends, the King had walked from the Deanery, stopping every now and then to scatter small pieces of silver among groups of merry-hearted boys, who had much amused him by the loudness of their vociferations, and who had followed him in his route. With a light foot, yet firm step, his Majesty ascended the stairs, and entered the room, removed his hat from his head, and bowed respectfully, though somewhat jauntily, to the Mayor, who acknowledged the same by a very formal obedience.

Close upon the heels of the King followed his brother, the Duke of York; the Earl of Rochester, Lord Halifax, and other courtiers. The bailiffs conducted His Majesty and His Royal Highness to the places assigned them, and, observing that they still remained standing:—

"May it please your Majesty to be seated," said the Mayor, bowing with lowly reverence.

"Out of this room," replied Charles, "I am England's King, and second to no man. Here I am a subject, and your Worship is the sovereign. I know my duty, and cannot sit, whilst my sovereign stands."

His worship seats himself, the monarch follows the example, and then all present.

"Oh yes! oh yes! oh yes!" brawls out Mike Ruddle; "the Mayor commands strict silence, under the pain of his

highest displeasure. So God save the King, and his Worship the Mayor."

The Town Clerk now states the object of the present assembly of the Corporation, and commences with fumbling over a heap of dingy and half-decayed parchments, and turning over the pages of a dog's-eared manuscript book—the former being the original charters which had been granted to the city during the course of eight centuries; and the latter consisted of entries of the translations of the said charter. In time the parchments are arranged in chronological order, and the book is laid open in the right place, and then his learnedship selecting the earliest of them, which he gives out as a grant of Kinegils, King of the West Saxons, to the Eolderman and Burgesses of the Vill Wintonceaster, in the year of our Lord 742. He holds to public display the musty document, more to the amusement than edification of the company; whilst a lanky young man, who acts as his clerk, reads its translation from the dog's-eared book. The second charter is used in the same fashion, when up springs Foreright from his seat on the left hand side of the Mayor—

"Stop! stop! Mr. Town Clerk, we have heard those things so often before that we know them all by heart: so you may save His Majesty's time and ours too by passing them by. His Majesty has confirmed our charters by his presence here to-day."

"I appeal to the Court," exclaimed the Town Clerk, uplifting his hands and stretching out his fingers; "We are bound to show our title, for his Majesty may be ignorant of the honours conferred on our poor city by his most illustrious progenitors. I speak as a lawyer."

The Mayor rises, and stretches out his hand with what he thought majestic dignity: "I think this interference with the business uncalled for, with all respect to the senior alderman. Proceed, Mr. Town Clerk."

"Stop! stop! stop!" cries Foreright, directing his eyes to his friend, the senior bailiff, from whom he received a significant wink that he was to proceed: "Our city is not an absolute monarchy yet—and I will take the opinion of the court."

The Mayor was in an unpleasant dilemma: for though he could always have his own way with the aldermen, he was anything but popular with the freemen, who warmly applauded

Foreright's proposition, and he dreaded that a division would be against him, and turned piteously to the King.

Charles, with a single glance, had a bird's-eye view of the case, and resolved to divert the threatening storm.

"My loving subjects, denizens of the most loyal of cities—I, the son of him you clung to in the most bitter of adversity, do not come among you to cause discord—Heaven forbid; for my father's sake, as well as my own, I love you dearly, and would heal your differences. I know your loyalty; your city's ancient fame is not a stranger to me. Pleasing tales may be often told, and the song of the nightingale never tires. I will hear with patience, nay, with pleasure. Take your own course. What pleases you, will please me also."

"Since your Majesty does not object, neither do I," responded Foreright; and down he sat.

The Town Clerk and his assistant proceeded with their task, which occupied more than a hour, without interruption. For some time the King listened with attention to what was read; but his patience tired out, and he became drowsy, but sought to get rid of it by surveying the countenances and divining the characters of his assembled subjects; then chatted with his brother, who sat on his right hand, his Worship being on his left; but again he was drowsy, and, as a last relief, fondled his spaniels, but all in vain; he fell asleep, and, then, snored—

Though the King snored, and lustily too, the Mayor knew it not, being lost in a misty dream of future greatness.

By the time the reading of the charters had been brought to a close, the King had taken his nap, and was wide awake.

The Mayor now rose from his seat, and taking in his hand one of the three small enamelled boxes which had been placed before him, proceeded to address his Majesty. "It was his pleasing duty, his high honour, his delightful task, to tender for his most high, most mighty, most sacred, and most illustrious Majesty's acceptance the freedom of his Majesty's most ancient and most loyal City of Winchester. It was impossible for tongue to tell the many virtues by which his Majesty was distinguished, but this he could say in the sincerity of his heart, that a monarch more illustrious, wise, brave, and religious, never filled the throne;" and, in language still more inflated, and flattery still more fulsome, went on an infinite deal of nothing—"a needle in a bundle of chaff"—and spoken with the greatest gravity, yet without the least

spark of feeling. It was evidently learned by rote; for though the speaker sometimes was at fault, his mighty self-esteem would not allow him to stumble, and on he went with unabashed confidence. He next addressed himself to the Duke of York, and then to the Earl of Rochester, to each of whom he presented the freedom of the city, the warranty of which was contained in the enamelled boxes.

His Worship resumes his seat a mightier man than before:

"With pert conceit his bosom glows."

"Ha, James," says the King, "Be you the spokesman, and wag your tongue to thank the Mayor and good citizens; ah! and do not forget the gentle dames and fair lasses!—a bit or two from your friend Jack Dryden will tickle their fancies! and win them all to thy side!—ha, man, go on!"

"I give place to your Majesty. After your turn comes mine," replied the Duke.

"I hope so, James, and that you may have some time to wait."

There was a pause—the royal brothers looked at each other, but the younger one was immoveable, whilst the elder, amused with his brother's seriousness, smiled, and then turning to his Worship and the citizens, addressed them in a light fantastic speech replete with compliment and humour. The company were amused, and all save his Worship and the royal Duke laughed heartily at the royal jokes and bits of fun—even the sergeants-at-mace caught the infection, which at length reached his Majesty, who laughed as heartily as any of his subjects, and was, indeed, a merry monarch.

This closed the business of the day, and now issued from the lungs of Mike Ruddle, in stentorian sound—

"Oh yes! oh yes! oh yes! all people may now depart this court, as the business is ended. So God save the King! and his Worship the Mayor!"

The King now places his hat upon his head, gently waives his hand, and there is a perfect silence.

"We are no longer a subject, but a sovereign!; and it is our turn to grant instead of to receive. We do not forget old attachments and kind favours, and it is our royal will to requite them; and, as a mark of our royal favour, three several boons will we grant, and that dissensions should not arise, let the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and, ah! that brave old alderman! that spoke so freely e'en now, be the choosers, and what they

say even that will I grant—so, old boy," beckoning to Foreright, "come forward, there's that about you that says you're honest; and under your wintry locks there's yet a summer's heat."

The Mayor descended fron his civic throne, approached the monarch, and kneeled before him, an example which was followed by the two others.

"May it please your Majesty," said the first, with a firm voice and unshaken nerve, "I leave it entirely to your royal will for what favour, distinction, or rank, you will confer upon your Majesty's devoted subject and servant, as I truly am."

"Humph! ha, ha! I will pay you in the coin you seek," said the King inaudibly to the other; and then drawing his sword and laying the blade on the Mayor's shoulders, exclaimed, "Rise, Sir Pharaoh and Sir Knight!" and Sir Pharaoh did arise a new-made knight, and the organ of self-esteem was bigger than ever.

"And now, Mr. Town Clerk, your pleasure?" said the King.

Now there is a peculiar turning of the hands over each other, a shaking of the frame, though his eyes glisten brightly and eagerly, as if hope and fear were having a set-to; at length the Town Clerk falteringly emits, "My services, I trust, have been performed as much to your Majesty's pleasure as to our city's weal, what recompense, pecuniary or otherwise, it is not for me to say. Whether the poor Town Clerk can better serve your Majesty elsewhere—I—I—trust in your royal generosity, and I throw myself and my office entirely at your Majesty's feet."

Be it so, be it so, Mr. Town Clerk; ha, ha, you shall be a groom of our chamber, or something else—odd fish! you shall have your reward. Wait on me to-morrow at the Deanery, and in the meantime I will speak to my Lord Treasurer;" and, then, turning to Foreright, "and now, Mr. Alderman, what for you?"

"Heaven forbid," exclaimed Foreright, with his natural energy, "that, in this red gown, I should sue for personal favour or advantage. No, no, it must be something for old Winchester; and I pray your Majesty to grant us some memorial that your royal self deigned to become a citizen of Winchester, and to be enrolled as a member of the Corporation, so that your Majesty's name nay live in everlasting remembrance."

"With all my heart, man!" replied the well-pleased monarch; "Thou art an honest fellow, though thou art as hot as a peppercorn; thy prayer shall be granted. Odd fish! what shall it be? our Treasury is but scant, and the Commons not over liberal; ha—ha—I have it. Sir Peter Lely has painted my picture. Whitehall shall give place to Winchester. You shall have it in this very hall; nor shall it come alone. The picture redeems our promised boon. Now, to show a mark of respect to your noble spirit, Sir Peppercorn, your maces of base metal shall be exchanged for others of silver gilt, at our own charge and cost. It is our pleasure, and shall be done."

It is recorded against Charles II. that he was very apt to forget his promises, but here, in Winchester, there are two exceptions to the charge: the portrait of the monarch, which still adorns St. John's House, and the four Corporation maces.

CHAPTER IV.

MIDSUMMER-EVE.

"A man's a man, for a' that!"

BURNS.

"Now, gentlemen, for another toast; and, mind ye, you must fill to the brim, and drain to the bottom. We all love a brave fellow—and all the better if he be of our side and party."

So spoke Master Cradock, to a goodly company assembled at the Royal Oak, at a dinner given by himself, as the senior bailiff, to the four constables; and to which he had invited his friend Foreright, and sundry of the opposition members of the Corporation.

The steaming punch was duly ladled from a huge bowl, which stood in the middle of the table, into several cups of ornamental delph (a manufacture then recently introduced from Holland) by the host, Will Foster, who formed one of the company; and then shouted—

"All ready, and right willing, Master Bailiff!"

"Well, gentlemen, our city has always been famous—that

you know—and why? Because it has always had warm-hearted, honest, and brave citizens:—men that will stand up for their rights, and do their duty; that is what has made our city famous, and it will be famous while it produces the like of them; and we have had a sample to-day—I don't mean our friend the alderman;—you all know he is a game-cock, and a fierce one, when his feathers be ruffled; but I mean a youngster quite as game; good breeding, I warrant! not a single white feather, or anything like it. I did'nt see the sport, but I have heard of it, and here it is:" and then went on to narrate the particulars of the *fracas* between Lord Cornbury and Maurice Kalendar, with additional circumstances and embellishments, greatly to the advantage of the latter; and then concluded by proposing his health as the city champion.

Before the company could do justice to the toast, Foreright was on his legs and burst out—

"Humph! you rascally sly-boots—not to let your captain know your feats-at-arms—pretty fellow—you deserve to be broke.—Ha! ha! ha! I'll tell old Betty; and glad the poor old soul, and won't she be glad? and won't she be proud of her boy. Ha! that she will—and so are all of us. Maurice, you are a noble fellow, and as brave as your namesake; and to your health, you young spice-cock;" and here the old man suited the word to the action, and tossed off his liquor, an example which was speedily followed by the rest of the company.

The young constable, who in the morning had so faithfully discharged his duty and withstood the threats of the king's kinsman, was not proof against the compliments of his friends. He arose to return thanks, but his heart was too full. He sought to disclaim the praises that had been showered upon him, and to reduce the bailiff's story to the limits of truth; but he could not find utterance of what he felt. Once, twice, thrice, he essayed to speak; but every third or fourth word was a stumbling-block. His cheeks were pale; his eyes, instead of darting brave defiance, were suffused with tears; and his whole frame was tremulous, and rendered the more by the repeated plaudits intended to give him confidence; and, at length, overcome by his feelings, he resumed his seat.

"My boy!" says Foreright, going up to his young friend, "your fancies be over-strained; what ails ye, man? I see you are ill at ease; so get ye home, and to bed, right speedily;

a long nap will be better than a doctor! so get you gone! good bye!"

"I will, sir; I feel I know not how."

Kalendar then rose from his seat, shook hands with Foreright, and walked towards the door, which he opened; and was on the point of going out, when he paused, turned round, and with a cheerful countenance and firm voice said—

"Master Bailiff and fellow-citizens, I thank you for your kindness; and hope always to deserve your good opinion and gentle services;" and then left the room and the house.

Upon reaching the street the fresh air had its reviving influence; and yet, for some time, he remained lost in thought as to what course to pursue. To return home he had but little inclination; he was not in spirits, as would cheer his mother; for though it would not be in her power to see his face, her hearing was keen; and she would easily detect the humour by the tone; and the day was too far gone to lay aside his Sunday suit, and recommence his daily labour. He, at length, allowed chance to direct his steps, and, in a few minutes, he was without the South-gate of the city, and had passed the causeway which crossed the ancient moat, now partly filled up, and a receptacle for all kinds of rubbish.

A few yards beyond the moat, there was a cluster of mean, thatched cottages, with gardens in front of them; and, in one of these, the family were assembled at their evening meal, which was placed on a small round table, and consisted of a loaf of very brown, probably barley, bread; a lump of hard cheese, and a large bundle of young onions—but without any cloth, dish, or plate; a jack, or leathern jug, filled with beer, and a single horn for the drinking of it. In the next garden there was a working man, smoking his pipe, and apparently watching the progress of the sun, as he wended his way from Cromwell's Battery to Crabwood; whilst near him were his wife and daughter, busily employed in spinning.

Maurice passed along the road, unconscious that there were any persons in the gardens.

"Sure, mother," said the man who was at supper, "that be Master Kalender, the white-smith; and ain't it a wonder he don't stop, and give a word to an old acquaintance and customer. He be at most times so chatty and friendly. I don't understand it."

"Meg, Meg," cries the man with the pipe in his mouth, "who be he so smart, that's scudding so fast? mortal fine,

and in a desperate haste; 'devil catch the hindermost;' something wrong! I say, the fellow seems frought."

"Oh father! that be young Kalendar; the chap that makes such natty locks and keys on Silver Hill; and did'nt he have a fight to day with Lord Colebelly about Alice Greenly."

"Oh, yes! I heard folks talk of somewhat. I don't quite take what it was about; but my gay buck was desperately in the wrong, and got well served out."

"Nay, father."

"Yes, I say, for something or nothing—because he is a city constable, he takes it in his head to knock down the king's cousin—think of that. If he knocked down my cousin, and I was king, I would have him tucked up, as sure as my name is Sam Bramble."

"Now father, you be all wrong, as you so often be."

"All wrong! all right, you stupid wench."

"All wrong, I say, without you know better than Dick Ruddle who was there—and you was at hay-cart. The lord was wrong, and said saucy things to Alice; and then Kalendar, who is her sweetheart, came up and spoke to him, and then the lord drew his sword and there was bloody battle, and the lord got the worst of it."

"But he had no right to strike the king's cousin: set on by the Pope and the Jesuits I suppose—the devil take them. I see it now, he is on the scamp to Hampton, to get aboard a ship out of the way; for if he stopt he would be hanged."

Onward pressed the subject of these remarks along the road, or rather lane, leading towards Southampton, which was so narrow, that two vehicles could not pass each other, except at certain gaps made for the purpose; and bounded on both sides by high banks crowned by tangled hedges of briars, brambles, woodbines, elder, and deadly nightshade; interspersed with ash, elm, and sycamore trees; amongst which might be seen or heard the screaming jay, the saucy magpie, the sable crow, and the pert starling; the cherup of the sparrow, the croak of the wryneck, and the song of the linnet. At some distance down the road, Kalendar diverged into some meadows on his left hand, from which the tired and sun-tanned haymakers had withdrawn. On he walked, in a kind of semi-abstraction, from which he was aroused by the curfew's sound, and, lifting up his eyes, found he was close to the walls of the Hospital of St. Cross. He was puzzled as to where he would go; but at length determined on calling on Mat. Kalendar, one of

the Brethren of the Hospital, passed the gate-way, and crossed the court-yard into the principal quadrangle, when he heard the sounds of revelry in the ancient refectory. It was Mid-summer-day (being what is still known as a "gaudy-day"), and the brethren regaling themselves and their friends with an unstinted supply of the hospital beer, brought from the cellar in huge black-jacks, and then improved, or at least altered in flavour, by the addition of wine, sugar, and spice; whilst from a score of burners of Virginian incense, the smoke issued in spiral form, ascending to the rich, open timber-roof of the hall. He mounted the steps and stood for some time without the door, and heard his uncle sing his favourite song :—

"Chloris, farewell! I now must go:
For if with thee I longer stay,
Thy eyes prevail upon me so,
I shall prove blind, and lose my way.

Fame of thy beauty and thy youth,
Among the rest me hither brought;
Finding this fame fall short of truth,
Made me stay longer than I thought."

Maurice was somewhat inclined to enter, and join the party, for he felt certain of a welcome; but he was "not in the vein" for merriment; so he retraced his steps, and going out of the southern portal of the hospital, entered into what is still known as the park—a meadow thickly studded with lofty elms. Around the base of these, situated on the margin of the river, which is here deep, wide, and still, there was a seat formed for the accommodation of the ancient brethren: here he rested himself, and for a time was amused at the successive rising of the trout for gnats, as they sported and fluttered over the placid stream, but at length dozed into his former thoughts. For the first time in his life he felt he was poor, a mean mechanic, and whose daily bread depended upon his own hard labour. Yet, he was too noble in spirit to deem it a disgrace, though he could not but regret it. He was in business, though in a humble way; yet he was hale, skilful, and industrious; had found good friends and approving patrons; the demand for his labour had steadily increased, and had brought in more than was sufficient for the support of his aged mother and himself. Still he was poor, and indebted to another for his position as a tradesman. With that he could almost find fault; he was at sea, or rather, in

a morass, with an *ignis fatuis* a-head. His brain was bewildered, and he dreamed strange dreams. The proceedings of the day danced before his eyes, most of them enveloped in mist, but one circumstance stood out in resplendent brightness. That in his affray in the morning he had done no more than he was in duty bound, and therefore not entitled to any thanks: so he thought. He had been thanked and praised by his patron Foreright, and assembled friends, and that was forgotten or lost in mist; but the words "Brave sir, accept my thanks: your kind services I shall never forget," was written, nay engraved, on his heart. In his ears were still the gentle, yet feeling tone; and to his eyes the fair form apparent as when she shrunk from the rude gaze of the libertine.

He now aroused himself, and taking a turn or two on the bank of the river said, with a half-suppressed voice, "She never can be mine; still I say, God bless her! and again I say, God bless her!"

He was about to return home, when his eyes caught sight of a small wherry descending the river, which was then free of obstructions to the city. Although the shadows of evening were growing apace, Maurice could easily discern by the light make, unusual form, and brilliant and fantastic colours with which she was decorated, that the boat was none other than the *Lady Kit*, the property of Sir Harry Hareslip, one of the grooms of the royal chamber. On the present occasion it was manned by five young gentlemen, one of whom sat at the helm, whilst the others rowed when necessary; but which was little required, as the current was rapid.

"Hold hard, lads! cried the helmsman, "whilst I make for the bridge (a wooden structure, which remained standing till within the last twenty years;) "we will go no further to-night!"

"Then," replied the youngest of the party, a lad of fifteen, "It was needless to come aboard. The stream has had so much its own way, that we have not had a single pull, or barely to wet an oar."

"But the many cranks and turns of the river have found work enough for me," replied the former.

"Then let us tack about and ascend the stream; the current will give occasion to our strength, play for our muscles, and an appetite for supper."

"Fitzjames, be not a fool, and prove yourself your father's boy in mind as in body, and wish to work against the current."

"To sail with the current is child's play, and may suit triflers but not me; let 's have something to do, noble captain, either in fun or earnest. I love to brave the storm; and honour the oak over the willow!"

"Most true, redoubtable Fitzjames—and dangers you will have to brave. There is no Stuart's blood in your veins. I love to take things as they come, and prefer the willow to the oak, as an example to follow; the bending saves many a crash—but here we are at the bridge," and, jumping out, bade the others secure the boat to one of the piers.

The crew of the *Lady Kit* consisted of Lord Cornbury, who was the helmsman; the Duke of Grafton, a natural son of Charles II., aged eighteen; Lord Durley, the Honourable Francis Kimpton, and James Fitzjames, the natural son of the Duke of York, and nephew of the afterwards famed Duke of Marlborough.

"Now we are landed," said the last-mentioned youth," so where's to be our next route?"

"To get free quarters, and to make ourselves at home anywhere, sailor-like," replied the captain. "Here, Grafton! shall we storm the old hospital; aye, and take it, and call upon the soldier parson, old Compton; and tell him Tottery-bones of London is dead, and your dad has fixed upon Fight-and-pray to step into his shoes. He keeps a good cellar, and so we may as well try it. Oxford for London, a good exchange; be you the herald of the news—your dad's envoy, and we are sure of a welcome!"

"Not I" answered Grafton; "if you are hungry or thirsty, you had best call at the lodge, as a poor traveller, and they must relieve you!"

"Aye, with stale bread and sour beer; but that do not suit my dainty stomach," said Cornbury. "I seek better fare — generous wines, spiced cakes, and sweet fruits; but since you will not be your dad's envoy, we will try something else; and introduce Fitzjames as tired of popery;" and turning to him—"you will not spoil our sport? You can confess, and get absolution of Father Giffard on the morrow!"

"Not I," replied Fitzjames haughtily; "I am, what I am, I 'll not call on old Compton, or any of his band of exclusionists. Call upon him, and 'tis ten to one, you will find him plotting treason; and writing letters to Russell, or Wallop, or Norton, and other malcontents of the county. Aye, I more

than suspect it; for this day I saw some one cross the city on horseback, which I took to be Lord Russell, for he was followed by a mounted knave in a livery of buff and blue."

"Father's boy, you are too thin-skinned to make a head in the world."

In the mean time Kalendar, who had been standing at a little distance, watching the movements of the boat and the landing of the party, but without knowing of whom it consisted, now came forward to tender any assistance he could render; but, upon perceiving Cornbury, would have withdrawn, had not the other addressed him:

"What, Sir Constable? the very man of all others I would meet! Now, sir! I call upon you, in the presence of these gentlemen, to beg my pardon, for this morning's insolence."

"Your pardon! my lord."

"Yes, sir, my pardon; and that speedily, or—"

"Threat as you please, my lord, and it will not move me. I have nought to be pardoned for, nor will I—"

"Ha, rascal, still insolent! I'll teach thee better manners," and forthwith the lord struck the commoner a blow on the shoulder with a cane which he carried in his hand. Within an instant it was wrenched from his grasp, and whirled and floating on the stream. His lordship next had recourse to his sword, but that speedily changed hands, was broken over his head, and the pieces followed the cane to the river. He then closed upon his opponent, but the struggle was brief, and he was thrown with considerable violence on the ground; but before the victor could recover himself, he was surrounded and made prisoner by the rest of the party.

Maurice made an exertion to release himself, but finding it hopeless, submitted to his fate. In the mean time Cornbury rose from the grass and said—

"Now this saucy varlet must be taught his duty to betters both in word and deed. We must administer a medicine to cool his blood; let him try the purifying effects of the stream; a second baptism will do him good—away with him to the bank."

"If that be your desire, Cornbury," cried Fitzjames, "I'll have no hand in it. I hold the fellow for your lordship's safety, and not to wait your vengeance."

"Avaunt, thou popish bastard," replied the lord, "thou craven, base-begot." Fitzjames withdrew his hold on the prisoner, and turning to Cornbury, sword in hand, exclaimed:

"Craven I never was, nor ever will be; and base-begot is far better than base-hearted; but that thou hast already been disarmed I would try thy courage. Take your own course, I'll none of it;" he then sheathed his sword, and walked haughtily from the spot.

In the interim, Kalendar, being held by three instead of four, made a desperate effort for his liberty, which he would have effected, but for a heavy blow on the head, inflicted by Cornbury, and which almost stunned him.

He was now hurried to the edge of the stream, where by a sudden exertion he released his arm from the grasp of Grafton, whom he sent reeling into the river, but whom by the united force of the others he was speedily to follow; and to fall into the water with such force, as almost to render him lifeless, and was carried by the current some way down the river.

"There, sink or swim, Sir Constable, I take it thy courage is cooled. Now, my lads, let him scramble out as he can; and let us return home, for it won't do to call upon old Compton to-night; but where is Grafton?"

"All right, Cornbury; but if Durley and Kimpton had not been better men than you, King Charles would have required a sable suit."

"Ha! ha! ha! replied the other, "come, let us find some snuggery, where you may warm your stomach; and keep away a chill; and, then, with cards and dice, we'll charm the night away;" so on they went.

But their motions were keenly watched in spite of the increasing darkness. There was a stealthy step behind the trees which they did not hear, as it moved backwards and forwards, as occasion required. The step now assumed its natural firmness and Fitzjames is standing on the edge of the river; his eyes scan the sullen water, rendered the more gloomy by the lofty trees on its western bank. And, then, there is a sudden plunge, and the lifeless body of the constable is in the arms of the scion of royalty. But he has set upon a task which baulks his courage, energy, and strength; although the depth of the stream does not exceed five feet, the bottom is a soft yelding mud, so that his feet sink several inches at every step, besides becoming entangled with matted weeds. He however reached the bank, but here commenced his real trouble as to how he is to land his burthen; the river had undermined the bank, which was, consequently, rotten; and with very little pressure the grassy sides fell into the water,

the bottom of which had more than six inches of soft mud. Still he strove to effect a landing, but, with every effort, his feet seem to sink deeper and deeper. He then seeks another landing place, but the weeds intercept his movements; his strength fails him, and he must either release his hold and abandon the youth to his fate, or lose his own life; when he hears, at a short distance, some foot-steps that go flop, flop, flop. The sound is encouraging, and Fitzjames shouts lustily for assistance, which is answered by a gruff "hallo!" and, then, the flop, flop, flop is more distinctly heard; and, presently, a figure, the outline of which in the darkening twilight resembled a giant orang-outang, was at the water's edge. His height exceeded six feet by several inches; of an athletic size, and prominent features; strong muscular arms of such a length that the fingers descended below the knee; whilst the lower extremities were well formed, save that the feet expanded something into the form of those of a duck. He casts his eye over the surface of the stream, gives a guttural expression "that's it," and then seats himself quietly on the bank, and as composedly enters the water feet first. He is quite at home in the liquid element; his feet do not seem to sink into the soft mud, and the matted weeds are without entanglement; stalks steadily along, grasps the two youths one under each arm, and calmly ascend the river to where the bank offered a convenient landing place; then places Fitzjames on his feet, who is speedily on *terra firma*, next deposits the body of Kalendar on the bank, and then lands himself.

"Thanks, old fellow, for your service," cried Fitzjames; you came just in time, or we should have both been food for the eels."

"And they are on the move," grunted the other; "thunder's a-brewing, and we shall have a storm before morning;—but who be you?" going up to Fitzjames, and looking him hard in the face: "I see—though I don't know your name; you be one of the youngsters that hang about old Charley. I got you a badger last week for baiting; hav'n't seen a better this many a day; gave good sport?"

"Capital, Sam; but let us see what can be done for this poor fellow. Shall I run to the Hospital for assistance?

"That will be nought, the gates are all closed long ago; and you may rap and ring for an hour, before you get that sleepy-headed old porter to the door; and then he will limp away for the other old fellow—as sleepy and lame as him-

self. No, no, I be used to these things; and if there be life, I promise it shall come back; follow me!"

Sam then took the lifeless body in his arms, and stepped out at a quick pace towards the bridge. Fitzjames volunteered his assistance, but the other replied,

"No, no—I can do it, and I will. With a drowning man, horse, cow, dog, sheep, or pig, I won't turn my back to any one. They all know old Sam—so come along."

He then crossed the bridge, still talking: "this be a short cut—save a good piece, but rather rough footing; I 'm used to it; mind where you step or you will get another ducking; follow me, and you can't be wrong!"

And on the old fellow went for full half a mile, through meadows intersected by numberless small channels, all containing more or less water; keeping his footing—not a stumble or a shake—a Londoner could not walk the broad pavement with more ease and apparent safety; but not so his companion; for what with the strangeness of the route, frequent channels, and the darkness of the night, he more than once, had a fall; but still he pushed on, keeping up with his leader, who began,

"Some trimming fine fish in that hole, my lord; hell-hole, we call it; precious deep, terrible cunning; the're bouncers—five or six pounders; coy as Nance Wiggen, parson Compton's maid"——and, changing his tone, "Ha! old fellow, I 'll be down upon you to-morrow!"

This ejaculation was caused by a whizzing in the air: they had disturbed a wild duck, but Sam's keen and accustomed eye had marked the spot from whence she rose.

They next had to wade through a branch of the Itchen, expanded to a considerable breadth, only very shallow; but up this stream they had to go, till they came in sight of a little cot, or shed, of mud and thatch.

"Now, my lord; if you be a lord," said Sam; "at the door there is a string; pull it, and the latch will spring up; and then give a push."

Fitzjames did as he was bid, and whilst doing so, Sam placed the body on the ground; and, going in, found his tinder box and struck a light, and, with a quantity of dry sticks, kindled a fire. He next prepared his humble bed for the reception of the sick man; and, with the assistance of Fitzjames, placed him upon it, and then applied heated clothes to the body and such remedies as his experience had taught him.

For a considerable time everything appears to be done in vain; still Sam perseveres, and at length there is a sparkle in his eye—it is but for a moment; still he perseveres, and animation is restored. But, now, another danger appears; there is on the forehead of the patient, a severe gash, as if he had fallen against a pile in the river; and with returning animation blood begins to flow. Fresh remedies are applied, and the wound is staunched; but the patient is lethargic, and sinks into a heavy slumber.

"Poor devil, thou be smartly pinched; be you who you may," muttered Sam; and then, turning to Fitzjames, "where comes he?"

"One of the city, a stranger to me; but tend him carefully, and you shall be rewarded; and take this as a warrantry," replied Fitzjames, pulling off his diamond ring, which he placed in the hands of his host.

Sam eyed the trinket, gently turned it over with the fingers of the other hand, and held it so that the fire darted its rays upon it, and then turns it about that his eyes may have another reflection of its brightness, evidently well pleased; and offered to restore it.

"Thank you, brave Sir! It is nought use to me; I don't want any thing; a good word and a friendly nod will do for old Sam. Horses, cows, pigs, and I don't know what besides I have saved; and a fellow creature ought not to be treated worse than a pig or a cow. No, man, take this thing; and let us make a better bed for this poor fellow; but, first, you need something to comfort your stomach;" and, going to a corner, produced a small bottle of quaint form and Dutch manufacture, and, offering it to Fitzjames,

"Here it be, good stuff; rather burny; Parson Compton gave it to me—he had lots of it sent him from Holland by our Lady Mary, that married the Stratteller. The parson was her schoolmaster, they say; and made her a good Protestant, or she would have been a poor moon-stricken Papist, like her father the duke."

There was a flush in the cheek of Fitzjames, and the old man perceived it; he then went on:

"Beg pardon, brave sir; no offence, I hope. I don't trouble myself with such things. Papists may be as good as other folks for aught I know. They do say the king be half a Papist, and his brother a whole one; and he has a score of priests in disguise about him; and that they send

every tale they hear to the fellow the Pope; only what sort of a fellow he is I can't guess; but Nance Wiggen tells I, that he is first cousin to 'the old one!' but come, drink, and warm thy stomach!"

The young man courteously declined, and the other went on, "Then, stay till I come back. I'll not be long; the poor chap needs a softer bed;" and then left the place.

Fitzjames now placed himself near to the sick man, who was in a heavy slumber, breathing hardly, and placing his hand on his forehead found it burning hot. He now waited the return of his host, and amused himself by surveying the place which did not measure more than fifteen feet by twelve; with walls of rough chalk which rose above five feet, and upon them rested a thatch formed of reeds. The walls were two feet thick, with two openings or windows, neither of which were glazed. In one corner there was a fire-place, and there only was there any appearance of bricks. The floor was of earth, composed of crumbled chalk, mixed with ashes, which gave it a hard surface. The furniture consisted of a table, supported by four legs, in the forming of which no other implement had apparently been used than a hatchet; a couple of three-legged stools; and in one corner was raised, a few inches from the ground, a very rough frame-work of wood, which served as a bedstead; a receptacle for hay, straw, or chaff, as chance offered, and on which was deposited an old blanket, and some ragged clothes. The rest of the contents of the place consisted of one or two pipkins, for boiling water and cooking; rat gins, fishing nets, and other implements for the capture of animals of the chase, vermin and inhabitants of the surrounding stream; whilst the door had no other fastening than a simple latch.

Within a quarter of an hour of his departure Sam returned, bringing with him as much new-made and sweetly-scented hay as he could grasp with both arms; and, with the assistance of Fitzjames, adjusted and made more comfortable his patient's bed. The young courtier gazed with mixed feelings of wonder and admiration on the strange wild-looking, brawny old man, who seemed to be incapable of doing anything with a gentle hand, so carefully, aye and so tenderly, performing his task.

"Now, sir, I think he be all safe till morning;" said Sam, "and if you will trust to me, he shall want for nothing. All hours are the same to me. I can sleep as well at mid-day as

at mid-night; but I suppose you can't, except for frolic's sake and when the cup or the dance comes in the way. So you had best get to your home and to your bed; and, in the morning, you'll be another man; and, then, if you'll come down you may find him better, and sensible, so I hope. I 'll point out your way, good sir," and then went to the door, which he opened.

Fitzjames firmly, yet courteously declined leaving, and insisted that he would keep watch whilst Sam should take his rest as best he could. This suggestion was refused: but the son of a Stuart was firm, and, like his father, doggedly firm; and the old man reluctantly gave way.

The other now offered to go out and get him some hay, to sleep upon, but this Sam would not hear.

"I have slept on the bare ground hundreds and hundreds of times, and in the open air winter and summer; all the same to Sam: sometimes on snow, sometimes on a tree, and once in a grave;" here he laughed, "I didn't mean that, but farmer Stubb's ale was too mighty; and, since, brave sir, you will be master-man, here goes it;" and then lying down and stretching himself out at full length on the hard ground, with his left arm for his pillow, he was in a few minutes sound asleep.

"Heaven bless thee! and may all the saints protect thee! thou fine old fellow; thou hast a noble heart, a sweet kernel in a rough shell," ejaculated Fitzjames, who now fell on his knees, and with uplifted hands invoked the aid of the Most High for him who, as it were, had fallen among thieves; and His blessings on him who had proved himself a good Samaritan.

He rose, refreshed in mind and body, and seated himself near the head of the sick man whose countenance he watched for a time with an intense interest; and, then, turned to the other sleeper, and, by the aid of the fire, which still burned, carefully surveyed him. He was originally of fair complexion, though his skin of a tawny hue, from continued exposure to wind and weather. His hair, eye-brows, and beard were shaggy, and of the colour and almost the stiffness of that of a badger. On his face were several scars, and some of them showed that, from time to time he had received deep wounds. His hands were covered with innumerable punctures, such as may be occasioned by gins, and the bites of enraged animals; for Sam was a sportsman, with whom nothing went amiss.

In the hunting of otters, then common in our Hampshire

rivers; in the baiting of bulls and badgers; in rat expeditions with ferrets; and in dragging of rivers, there was no one found his equal, in skill, in courage, and in patient endurance of pain. He was a kind of amphibious animal, who delighted in moisture; nearly half his time was passed in the water; and when his skin was dry the moisture was required inwardly, and to obtain the necessary means, he would endure any kind of bodily punishment, even to running pins into his calves. Years ago he wandered through the country, far and wide—passing his nights under hay-ricks, or amongst the branches of trees; and, sometimes, was not heard of for months. Latterly he had confined his rambles, and seldom wandered many miles from home. He had no certain employment—always cheerful to do some rough job which others would gladly avoid; but was most at home at any kind of sport. He was honest, and grateful for favours conferred on him; and stood so high in the favour of Farmer Scrubbs, from his services as a destroyer of vermin, that he allowed him to occupy, without rent, the house or shed that was erected for the reception of the waterman's tools. His dress was a most strange compound; things picked up here and there; for Sam never bought an atom of clothing. He never had any money in his pocket, even if he had the inclination. His hat, that lies by his side, had a high crown and broad brim, and was probably once a Puritan's; his coat, soiled and torn, was of the fashion of the day, and perchance had been worn in the presence of royalty; his vest, to all appearance, had been made more than thirty years; and his nether-garment was such as might have been worn at Naseby or Worcester; hose he had none, and his legs, like his arms, exhibited numerous marks of savage bites; and, on his feet, were two odd boots, though of somewhat the same make, with large flapping tops.

Fitzjames was amused; but, on turning his eyes to his charge, found the still heavy sleep; and the contagion extends itself to the watcher, who manfully combats it. He stalks the room for a time, then opens the door, and breathes the fresh air; watches the course of the stars, and perceives in the east the first streaks of light; listens to the sound of falling waters, then washes his face in the running stream, and returns to his charge in the hut, where, at last, Nature prevails, and his eyes are closed in sleep.

CHAPTER V.

THE MOTHER AND HER COMFORTER.

"Oh! there is an enduring tenderness in the love of a mother to her son which transcends all other affections of the human heart." WASHINGTON IRVING.

If the night was spent in a state of unconsciousness by the wounded man, it was far otherwise with his aged and afflicted mother. Early in the evening she expected his return; but she patiently awaited the going down of the sun, and yet her keen ears did not catch the sound of his well-known step; and, when the long continued twilight had merged into darkness, her anxiety for his return had changed into fears for his safety. "As none but mothers' feel, she felt." She wondered that he did not come, and speak a word of comfort to her ear, and receive her nightly blessing. She prayed for him, and then sought to kill time by counting the ticking of the clock, and then prayed again. On no former occasion had he been so long absent. She feared that at the city feast, or distant revelry, the sounds of which entered her casement, he had been prevailed to prolong his stay, and partake too freely of the flowing cup, but she forgave him. There was no reproach on her lips, no murmur in her heart. She would only think on him as the best of sons, the noblest of men—her support—her solace—her pride—her own dear, dear boy.

Twelve booming sounds from the tower of the Cathedral had proclaimed the witching hour, and still she was alone. The loud huzzas had ceased, and the lusty shouting had died away, and the step or voice of the tired reveller was heard no more, and silence reigned supreme, save the monotonous ticking of the clock. A hundred horrid fancies crowded upon her mind, and every kind of mishap presented its fearful form. Gladly would she have arisen from her bed, and gone forth to seek her beloved, but her limbs forbade their aid, and she thereby felt her infirmities. Again she prays, but not for self; and again she counts the ticking of the clock, and then tries to close her eyes and take rest; but, prevented by excruciating pain of mind, which extends itself bodily,

whilst the minutes and the hours, "like to a foul and ugly witch, do limp the hours so tediously away."

All powerful Nature at length prevailed, and soon after sunrise she sank into a gentle slumber, from which, after a few hours duration she was aroused by her attendant, Hannah Dangley, who told her that Jack Snuggins, a brawny one-eyed Cyclop, rejoicing in the appropriate name of Vulcan, was in the smithy, and wanted to see master; and, then, all her tribulation and fears were renewed, and it was some time before she had the power and courage to direct that Snuggins should go to Alderman Foreright, to request his immediate attendance.

The worthy old alderman was at breakfast, with his two grand-boys, Walter and Philip Newbolt. On an oaken table, in front of him, was a large piece of fat bacon, with that pinky hue and transparency which told that it had been well-cured; a loaf of coarse wheaten bread, and a leathern cup known as a black jack filled with small ale; whilst the children feasted on bread and milk. They had all good appetites, but they stayed now and then to share in the conversation which turned on the gay doings of yesterday. The old boy had much to tell, and the young ones were well pleased in listening. The ardent loyalty of the veteran showed itself in strong colours in his praise of the king, whose wit, good humour, and condescension had entirely overcome everything else; and great was his surprise when he had learned from the youngsters that they had also reasons for remembering his majesty; and still more when they, after dipping their hands into their pockets, produced a number of those small silver coins of Charles II. which they had obtained in the scrambles. There were penny, two-penny, three-penny, and four-penny pieces, of that monarch; their value being signified by the intersection of the letter C. on the reverse; the penny only bearing the C.; the two-penny being crossed by another C.; and so on. The old man took the pieces, and admired them; was warm in the praise of the king; commended the lads for having pushed, or knocked their fellows, for he was earnest in everything; and, quitting the table, went to a drawer and took out a hammer and punch, and made holes through the two largest, and found two pieces of string, which he drew through them, and then placed them round the youngsters' necks, telling them they were now truly King Charles's men, and they must never part with them; and then went on

talking and laughing, when the man Snuggins made his appearance.

"Aye! how now, old Vulcan?" exclaimed the alderman, though the latter was full ten years his junior; "what's thy will? the latches and bolts are all right; nor does the poker want bitting—though you say an inch of iron is worth a bushel of coals."

"Please ye, alderman, that bean't my business!"

"And what be it? thou hast my good services for St. Cross. I have spoke for thee; but thou must have patience in waiting for dead men's shoes."

"No, that bean't it; but this is: Missus do want to speak to thee; and at once, please ye, alderman."

"Humph! humph! no worse, I hope."

"She be in a peck of trouble," said Vulcan; who paused, scratched his head, and looked unusually grave.

"Eh, man, what ails her?"

Vulcan again scratched his head, and then with a long breath answered, "She be sick at heart; Maurice bean't come home since he went off so gaily fine yester-morn with his constable's staff. Not that I think much on't; two or three days truant be nothing to I, you do know, alderman; but missus thinks of nothing else than he; and she do fret and pine—bless my soul how she do."

"Humph," muttered the old man "'boys will be boys.' I was once a boy and a forward one; and, ha! I have yet a colt's tooth, though I don't like late hours and never did; and where can he be? t'is not like him to play the fool; nor did he seem in the humour when we parted. Humph, something wrong somewhere; but I'll find it out somehow; so keep a still tongue, Vulcan; you must not let mouth till I give the view-hallo; eh, man?"

"Mum, alderman," replied the blacksmith.

"Then get ye gone; and tell thy mistress I'll soon be with her; be sure to tell her it will be all right; and, mind ye, don't ye stay in the streets a chatting, or pay a morning call at the Red Hat, or Blue Pig; or I shall be there before you."

Vulcan then left, and the alderman instead of any longer listening to or answering his grand-children, turned his back upon them, drew his chair towards the fire-place, placed his feet upon the fender, and his hands upon his knees, and seemed to have forgotten they were present. He was troubled, and the lines of his face grew suddenly into gigantic propor-

tions, and then as suddenly subsided; whilst there was an uneasy movement of the shoulders and a slight convulsion of the whole frame.

"You are not well, grandfather," interposed the eldest boy.

"No, Walley, I am well—hearty and well; never was ill in my life," replied the old man; then rose from his seat, and kept on walking from one end of the room to the other in proof of his assertion. "Hearty and well; nought ails me; find me wind, I 'd run ye both for a college stuckling;" and then, pausing to consider, "Get you to school, boys! Oh, I forget myself, it is Baptist-tide, and books and slates are in the locker, and your master has nought to do but to mend watches, and train his roses and honeysuckles; so you may take your nets and go fishing. Mind ye—minnows and gudgeons, or a trout if you can; but no groping for crays, or you will get washed and dirty. So, good bye!—sorry I can't go with you." He then patted the youths respectively on the head, and they left the room half sorrowful, but the old man was more so.

A night's adventure was, at this period, a thing of frequent occurrence with men of all ages; and Foreright, through life, had ever been more of a royster than saint, yet such was his confidence in his *proteye* the young locksmith, he could not but imagine that some misfortune had overtaken him. He reviewed the proceedings of the yesterday, but no sooner was the quarrel between Kalendar and Lord Cornbury brought to his remembrance, than he suspected the latter of foul play; for it was notorious that the young bloods who followed in the wake of the "Merry Monarch," were not at all scrupulous in splitting of noses and cutting-off ears, and other cowardly and cruel acts, to revenge any personal offence.

With the impulsive nature of Foreright, suspicion was speedily followed by certainty; and, within a few minutes, he was in the Close, and within sight of the Deanery, with the intent to demand justice from his Majesty; when it flashed upon his mind, that he had nothing whereby to prove it, or even to show a probability, except the reputed *fracas*, which he did not witness. He now retraced his steps, and made his way to the house of sorrow.

Goody Kalendar was glad to hear the voice, though she could not see the person, of her old friend and quondam sweetheart; who, although uncomfortable in himself, was determined to hide his own fears in an assumption of high

spirits, and well he played his part; for he prattled, and he joked, and he laughed, as was his wont forty years before.

"Ah, old acquaintance! a bit mopish about the youngster, but cheer up: boys will be boys; can't put old heads on young shoulders. I was young once, and so were you; and have been partners at a hundred may-poles—ha! ha! ha! To be sure, he ought to have come home, but yesterday was a day of days; think of it, Goody Kalendar, King Charles made a freeman of our city; and ought not every true Winchester man to be proud and merry upon it? and he that is'nt ought to be kicked out of the place, and I would be the first to do the job. There was'nt such a smart young fellow, and modest too, and did what he had to do better, than Maurice. Our good king was quite struck with him, and hundreds of gay ladies smiled upon him—ha! ha! ha! He'll do bye-and-bye, no body better; but you know, 'all work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy.' For a penny cake against a farthing apple, some of the king's servants have kidnapped him, and made him drink his majesty's health a little too often; and put him to bed, and he 'll come home presently, only the worse through a head-ache. So forget and forgive, and make yourself easy; boys will be boys! If I could have my time over again, I would have tripped till this time. Hurrah for King Charles, our new citizen!"

The widow wished to express her apprehensions; her friend would not give her an opportunity, but went on dilating on the good qualities of the youth, and expressing his certainty all would end well, which was done with such a kindly spirit, and such a natural vehemence, as in great part to remove her fears, and she promised to think better of it, and patiently await his return.

Outside of the sick woman's chamber Foreright was no longer a merry soul; he had sought to appease the widow, and was puzzled how next to proceed. Still, not discouraged, he called Vulcan, and afterwards Will Foster, to his assistance, who separately threaded every street and lane of the city, making the fullest enquiries, and for several hours to no purpose; for, on the preceding day, all were so intent on the gratification of their own curiosity and pleasure, as to be quite oblivious to the presence of their nearest neighbours. It was somewhat past noon, when Vulcan brought the information that Kalendar had gone to Hampton, to go on board one of the king's ships, bound to the Bermudas, where there was a

great demand for smiths. The alderman could not give credence to the statement, yet he resolved to test its accuracy, and he directed his steps to the very cottages, which the missing man had passed on the preceding evening; and here he learned from several of the women (the men being absent at their daily work) that Kalendar walked down the road at a rapid pace, as if he was on a journey, near seven o'clock; and one of them went so far as to say that he was going to Hampton, to get out of the way, for he should certainly be sent to prison, if not hanged, for having struck the king's kinsman.

This startled the old man; he remembered that Kalendar had left the party at the Royal Oak somewhere about that time; that, at the feast, he appeared troubled and melancholy; and that in the morning words, if not blows, had passed between Kalendar and Lord Cornbury, which he considered a sufficient confirmation of the woman's tale; and to Southampton he resolved to go, and a horse from Foster's stables afforded him the means of transit.

CHAPTER VI.

A JOURNEY TO HAMPTON.

"Hence away I then hastened to one of the neatest and compleatest towns in all these western parts, into which I entered at the Northgate thereof with no little fear, between the jaws of two rampant lions and two thundering warriors—Ex-part that fearful giant on the one side, and brave Bevis of Southampton on the other; if above them had not been placed our late renowned virtuous Queen Elizabeth, to daunt their courage and quell their fury, and to suffer peaceable passengers to have quiet and safe entrance."—ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.

IT was full twenty years since the alderman was last on saddle, and even in his younger days was not much of an equestrian, yet he mounted his steed with all the courage, though lacking the activity, of youth. To be sure, the animal, like its rider, had seen the best of its day, was a steady goer and had no vice, but then it had a will of its own, and would go its own pace, defiant of whip, bit, or spur, and when it chose would become immoveable.

The twelve miles of road between Winchester and Southampton was very different at that period to what it is at present, no hills had been lowered, or valleys raised, or crooked ways made straight, the formation being neither understood or cared for.

The first portion of the road, namely as far as Otterbourne, was by far the best, and although many places were rendered dark by high banks and over-hanging trees, it had a solid foundation of chalk. The village of St. Cross, which then consisted of a few scattered cottages, with the old hospital on the left hand, was soon passed; and a little more than a mile brought our traveller to Compton, where he intended to pull up; but that task was spared him, for his steed was a veteran roadster, and understood the meaning of chequered marks on a door post—"Good accommodation for man and horse."

He descended, giving his horse in charge to a round-faced, curly-pated lad, the crown of whose head hardly reached the animal's nostrils, and entered the house, where he encountered the landlord, a Winchester man, who had exchanged his cobbler's stall for a rustic hostelry, and had given up his lapstone and lasts for the cultivation of a small plot of land. Our host expressed his pleasure at seeing the alderman so active and well, and his wonder at seeing him so far from home.

"As to that matter, Crispin," replied the other, "I wager a silver penny that I know every crick and corner of your parish better than you do. Fifty years ago, I used to follow the Cranbury harriers, when they, under Squire Coram, used to meet on Yew-hill; and follow, I would, till one leg could hardly drag on its fellow after it, and a tirey time it was to get home; but then, with a good night's rest, I was as nimble as a cricket, and as merry as a lark. But could'nt do it now—bellows to mend," and then tapping his chest, sat down on the settle.

"I always said you would die game, alderman; but what will you take?"

"Aye, Crispin, I am but a sorry customer, but I 'll make my quarters good, so give your friends, at their nine-pins, a jorum of two-penny at my expense." He then made his errand known, but could obtain no further information than that early in the morning, Tom Vine, of Fernhill, had met a well-dressed young man walking towards Southampton.

The village of Compton has seen its changes during the lapse of two centuries. True, there was then as now the old Norman church, with its doorways exhibiting the zig-zag decoration; and its venerable yew-tree in the churchyard, resembling a monster mushroom, beneath the shade of which, the elders of the place were wont to assemble, previous to divine service, to hear the news and discuss the gossip of the village; but the adjoining parsonage was but a thatched cottage; and on both sides of a narrow lane, which ran westward till it emerged into the open down, there were several farm-houses, with their diminutive homesteads, nestling under venerable elms; but the first is now only habitations for labourers, and all traces of the latter are obliterated, save a solitary barn, and the marks of half-levelled earth-banks and decayed pollards.

Nearly the same may be said of Otterbourne, which Foreright reached in due time, but not until his steed had passed through one of the tributaries to the Itchen, not then bridged over.

The character of the road had now changed from a chalky to a gravelly bottom, in some places consisting of loose sand with large rolling pebbles, and in others of heavy clay, very retentive of moisture, and which had the disadvantage of being in a perpetual shade, in consequence of the thick wood through which it ran. Oaks which had seen the coming-in and going-out of centuries; and ash, which once could merit the appellation of the Venus of the Forest, but now displaying unmistakeable marks of age and decay; whilst under these was an entangled mass of hazel, holly, briars, thorns, and furze; the cart-ruts were more than a foot deep, and partly filled-up with water, and the main track was so wretchedly bad, that there were constant deviations of the road, to avoid one obstacle or another.

The bridge, now known as Chandler's Ford, did not then exist, and the passage was through a wide-spread morass, intersected by a rapid stream; whilst Marlbrook Pond was an extensive sheet of water, with numerous withey beds rising out of it, and its margin fringed with stunted ill-grown alders, whose very ugliness and contorted limbs plainly told they had been subject to alternate starvation and repletion. Across the pond there was a causeway which in the winter season was some inches under water, and at all times difficult, if not dangerous, to strangers. The remaining portion of the road to within a mile of Southampton was through a wild and

naturally barren country, nearly devoid of trees, with stunted furze, and heath, and sickly grass, which barely covered the ground. Yet even here our traveller passed on joyously. He scented the wild thyme "spicy sweet;" his ear caught the hum of the bee, as it winged its flight from flower to flower; the varied notes of the tiny warbler, the unvarying cry of the pee-wit, and the now harsh voice of the cuckoo; whilst his eye feasted on surrounding scenery, where the golden drops of the furze, formed a strong but pleasing contrast to the purple dye of the heath. Far to his right hand were the dark woods and opening glades of the New Forest; right ahead were the spires of Southampton, and the blue waters of the estuary, dotted here and there with white sails; and beyond it rose the verdant hills of the ancient Vectis. To his left the ground sloped irregularly down to the valley of the Itchen, where, half-hid by the timber of the park, rose the twisted chimneys and numerous gables of Stoneham Grange, once the summer residence of the Abbot of Hyde, but then, as now, the seat of the well-known Hampshire family of Fleming.

But the route also presented objects of a less pleasing character, for, at no great distance, were to be seen lofty gibbets, with their appending irons, by their own weight rendered motionless in the gentle breeze, but with "the wind careering high" would send through the wild waste a creaking, cranking, dismal, unearthly sound, enough to scare the hare from its form and the bird from its roost. They marked the spots where a murder had been perpetrated, or some daring robbery committed.

Under one of these, situated in a deep dell, there was an encampment of gipsies. A shapeless tent, upheld by posts of all heights and sizes, the plunder of a neighbouring coppice, with a covering of coarse canvas, a thing of shreds and patches, and resembling Joseph's coat, being of many colours. In the back-ground there were a couple of carts, with their shafts turned upwards, and beyond them two horses, high in bone and low in flesh, and half-a-dozen donkeys, clog-footed to prevent their wandering too far in search "of the scanty blade;" and further on, a number of half-clad urchins engaged in searching the furze for birds' nests. On one side of the tent there was a fire, and over it a cauldron, suspended from an apex of poles that met high above the blaze of the crackling wood, and was tended by an ancient crone, whose

fierce looks, grey dishevelled hair, commanding gait, hoarse voice, and strange costume would a few years previously have rendered her liable to be tried, and upon the slightest evidence, however false and improbable, of being convicted and hanged for witchcraft.

Seated on a bank to her right hand, were four younger women, one of whom was suckling her child, whilst the others were engaged in plaiting rushes, so as to form baskets—at that period a branch of gipsy merchandise.

On the other side of the tent, there were three men lying on the ground in lazy attitudes, smoking tobacco; and the whole company were evidently the descendants of him against whom it was foretold "that his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

As our horseman approached the tent, his steed shied with an evident inclination of turning round—a feeling in which the rider shared, for he had a superstitious dread of the wild race, and believed the strange stories he, from a boy, had heard against them; but as he perceived that their eyes were fixed upon him, and thinking that it was impossible to escape, did they intend mischief, he determined to put on a bold face, and forced the horse much against his will to proceed. When he got opposite the fire, he pulled up and hailed the old woman, and inquired of her whether a young man in decent habit had passed that way?

"Hoity, toity," exclaimed the beldame, whilst she brandished the ladle she had in her hand, "call a body to blow upon a 'prentice lad, that don't like slavery, and leave the pot for that. No, no, he hasn't been by here, and if he had, we would have given him a welcome. Good luck to the bird that quits his cage, says I; and good luck to him, and may he always keep out of the clutches of ye money-hunting and money-making cits. Away with you, you'll have nought from the Lees and Stanleys."

The alderman had some difficulty in making her understand that the person he sought was neither a runaway apprentice, or one who had offended the law, which so far appeased her anger that she not only admitted that her party had only occupied their present position a few hours, but called one of the men, whom she said had been into Hampton that morning.

"I did meet a youngster within a mile of the town," said the party alluded to. "He did seem nearly done up—leg

weary, and limped away like a worn out hack with good blood in its veins. Still, he pushed along as if a score of constables were at his heels. He was a smartish chap, and gaily dressed, but his finery was so ruffled that I should guess he had passed the night under a hayrick."

"Ha, ha!" cried Foreright, chuckling at the idea that he was on the right scent. "Good looking lad, eh, eh? Smart fellow, eh, eh?"

"Truly, sir, a more comely and active lad there isn't in all the kings beefeaters, and grand he would look in the scarlet dress. I know them well."

"Well dressed, you said," interposed the alderman, "tall, and with long black hair."

"Your honour is right again," replied the gipsy, with an arch smile; "a pure gentleman, I warrant, but almost dead beat. Were he fresh I should want odds to run against him; and if in the wrestle, I should have the throw; I should hardly like to match him at singlestick. I could see it in him—he was game all over."

Ha! ha! that's Maurice, or my name isn't Jack Foreright," said the alderman, waving his hazel twig triumphantly; and then dipping his hand into his pocket and giving the other some money, went on, "You're an honest fellow, so that for your trouble, and mind you drink to the health of good King Charles."

The distance of another mile brought him within sight of something which had the resemblance of a gigantic shield, painted with flaming colours, and which he mistook for the sign of a roadside inn, but on a nearer approach saw that under it a gate crossed the road, and on the left side of it a cottage formed of turf. The gate was opened in due time by the inmate of the hut with the expectation of a gratuity, which was readily given. By inquiry Foreright learned that the painting on the shield was the Southampton arms, and marked the northern extremity of the county and town of Southampton, which was here separated from the rest of Hampshire by a hedge and deep ditch, but the information which our traveller mostly sought for he could not obtain.

His feelings of disappointment were, however, speedily removed by the assurance he was but a short distance from the town, for on both sides of the road a great number of horses and cattle were grazing—the burgesses of Southampton possessing a right "to turn out" on their spacious common,

whilst as he travelled onward the soil appeared to be of better quality; the trees were lofty and clean in growth, the underwood luxuriant, and the furze large and vigorous.

At an open space he was amused by the sight of a score of boys, with dogs of all breeds and sizes, engaged in hunting a badger. The sight called up all the boy within his soul, and he stood up in his stirrups to view the sport and enjoy the fun. Nor was he silent—first he shouted to a lout of a boy not to head the beast, but let him have fair play; and when the poor animal was pinioned by a large mastiff, he protested so vehemently against the use of such a big dog, that it was made to forego its hold, and the badger had another start, and made its way into the dense furze amidst the shoutings of boys and yelling of dogs; whilst the old man rode on chuckling, turning round his head every minute to see whether the party had dislodged the badger, when his steed came to such a sudden standstill as almost to unhorse the rider.

It was a place of entertainment for man and horse, as it still continues. The house itself was nothing more than a thatched cottage, the residence of the corporation cowherd and guardian of the common; and on one side of it there was a long range of sheds formed principally of furze, affording shelter to the numerous horses, cows, and heifers, which at that time were turned out on the common to graze at large. On the other side of the house there was a newly-erected building, the sides of wood very fantastically painted, and in one place exhibiting the Southampton arms. It consisted of a single room in which the corporation held their court-leet, and exercised their manorial rights, but at other times was granted to the cowherd for the accommodation of his customers.

The company assembled in it at this time was limited to two persons—the ex-Protector, Richard Cromwell, who was residing at Hursley, under the assumed name of Clarke, and his friend Frank Huggins, the town-clerk of Southampton. Their meeting was by agreement, for Master Clarke had reasons for avoiding the town in which he once bore sway, not only as head of the State, but as a neighbour; but this was not sufficient to deter him from taking a ten-miles walk across the country with his invariable companions, his dogs, to dine, drink, smoke, and chat with his friend; and then walk another ten miles, which, in spite of three-score years, he could easily accomplish in three hours.

The town-clerk was more than ten years his junior, and

had commenced his career as a lawyer, and as the agent in the Hursley interest for the representation of the town, and faithfully did he serve it, and yet wisely, for he never allowed his zeal to outrun his discretion, and always had an eye to the future. He made no enemies and he was friendly with all, and had his reward, for, upon the deposition of his patron and the restoration of the king by government, he thought it expedient to trim his boat and to declare himself a devoted royalist. His fellow townsmen took him at his word, and granted pardon, absolution, and remission of all his political sins. But if, lawyer-like, he yielded to a storm which he could not withstand, he had the courage to wait upon the deposed Protector ere he became an exile, to thank him for his kindness and many favours.

"Don't mention that," replied Richard, "I wish to forget many things, but not your valuable services. We are all children of circumstances—floating cork upon the stream of life, and must go as the current wills us. I have been a puppet king, a nine day's wonder, a great man for a little while, but now plain Richard Cromwell. You kissed my hand when I was installed Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland; and I hope to see you filling an office, if not so high, far more durable and profitable, aye, to pass many an hour together, forgetful of what I have been."

They parted the best of friends, but for a period of nearly a quarter of a century they did not see or hardly heard of each other, but when Cromwell, tired of his self-imposed exile, returned to England under the assumed name of Clarke, and again resided at Hursley, he made enquiries for his old acquaintance, and finding him still living, opened a correspondence with him, the result of which was the present meeting.

The town-clerk was one of those happy mortals who are content to take the world as they find it, and allow nothing to trouble them. *Dum vivamus, vivamus,* was his motto, and his practice corresponded with it, for which he paid the penalty in frequent visits of the gout. His countenance bore a very strong resemblance of that of Henry VII., as shown in his "broad-faced shillings," nor was his bodily frame much at variance with that of the self-willed monarch.

The dinner hour had long passed, and the worthy couple were in full enjoyment of their pipes and claret. The senior had his say on the dangers and excitement of the chamois chase, and dilated on alpine scenery, Swiss customs and man-

ners, and of his visit to different towns in Savoy and the south of France: whilst the junior narrated, as best he could, the changes which had taken place in Southampton, when he was interrupted—

"Enough of the Hampshire gossip, Frank. Now tell us of your late expedition to London, where you went like Jason in search of the golden fleece, of your gay doings and exploits at the Goose and Gridiron; and of your return to Hogland, either as viceroy, missioner, or a recruiting sergeant; or, perchance, all three in one."

"Sir, you speak in parables, and I am at a loss for your meaning."

"Humph, humph," ejaculated the old man, shrugging his shoulders and twisting his rosy proboscis, whilst his grey eyes, beneath their shaggy brows, sparkled with delight. "Not understand, that is what we lawyers but seldom admit; and, even now, thy cheek tells upon thee. Now, I did hear that thou sported a leathern apron and handled a trowel, and that so dexterously that after an apprenticeship, not of seven years, but of fourteen days, you became"—

"A master-mason."

"Ha-ha-ha, the little bird whispered truly. You must have been an apt scholar—a second Crichton, to do a rod of brick-work blindfolded within three hours. I should have taken thee to have been too stiff in the joints to have carried a hod of mortar up a seventy-round ladder, and too unsteady to have wheeled a barrow round the ridge of St. Paul's without thou hadst kept a week's Lent, of which I can never suspect thee."

"Some one has imposed upon your credulity."

"Not a whit of it. Old birds don't mistake chaff for corn. Humph, ha, dost not thy noble order claim an antiquity which would put a Welsh pedigree into the shade? and if my informant tells me truly, and I have no reason to doubt him, that were the Masonic assumptions to be put into one scale, and the whole host of Popish legends in the other, that whilst the former would deeply mortice the earth, the latter would be sent wandering amongst the stars."

"I think you have confounded the corn with the chaff: nor are we accountable for every idle tale set going either through fun or mischief, or by some wild enthusiast."

"You are right, Frank," replied the other, in a serious vein. "Wild enthusiasm will bring ridicule, discredit, and danger to the best cause, and we have witnessed its effects in

days long past; and do we not feel it now when we have perjured wretches rewarded and pensioned. Every enthusiast is a knave or a madman, and not seldom both in one."

"I am glad to know you do not think us such errant fools."

"Stay, man, stay. I do not take you to be a band of Solomons; and as to the idle tales and gross lies, they are nothing but what you ought to expect. You have fairly earned them."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the town-clerk.

"Aye, truly. Where there is mystery there will be lies. Folks are so given to babbling, that babble they will, and what they don't know they guess upon; and guesses after a little travel become sworn facts, though in truth they are monstrous lies. Bold fellows you with your oaths of secrecy. I should be in daily fear of spies and informers, knowing how richly such vermin are now rewarded."

"But you forget that his majesty, being a brother, is a guarantee of our loyalty."

"Pooh, pooh! what do I hear? His majesty! Humph. You are bolder men than ever to place any trust in Rowley: but under the rose be it spoken. He is but a sorry reed to rest upon. He serve you in the day of need? as well look for ripe apples in May, or gooseberries at Christmas. Judge and jury might convict you upon evidence which he knew to be false, and then, upon a very little compulsion, he would sign your death-warrant, and, afterwards, in the company of his parasites and courtesans, chuckle at their folly, and your misfortune. I tell thee, Frank, I have been all my life a free-speaking man, and abhor mystery. Mischief lurks in the dark. Your brotherhood may mean no ill, nor do I suspect it, but only men at boy's play. Shadows of former substances with an object as senseless as a Protestant knell or funeral anthem, which is but a soulless successor to the Popish dirge. You would have found very little favour with my father—stern Oliver, who would have sent you across the Atlantic, there at full liberty to bamboozle the red Indians by your midnight revelries.

"Thank heaven, saving your worship's presence, we live in better days,"

"Stop, man," said Cromwell, with unusual vehemence; "better days—better days, indeed! It must be backwards, like a crab's march. Is life and property more safe? In our

time was profligacy encouraged, midnight assaults winked at, bullies paid, and perjury rewarded? I tell thee, man, there has been more more gross perjuries, shameless convictions, legal murders, and ten times more shedding of innocent blood during these last three years than there was from forty-five to sixty, or would have been, had the Commonwealth been as long-lived as Methuselah."

At this moment Foreright entered the room, having determined on walking into the town, for the express purpose of stretching his legs. He respectfully doffed his hat and passed the time of day with the strangers, one of whom he fancied he had seen before, but when and where his recollection did not serve him. He took his seat and gave his orders to the attendant tapster. There was something in the appearance of Master Clarke which caused his eyes, as if spell-bound, to be frequently directed towards him, followed by puzzlings of the brain. The other observed it, but his recollection was not so faulty. The lawyer was aware of the position of both parties, and came to the relief of his friend by divers agricultural inquiries, the cut of grass, the yield of wool, the prospect of the harvest, and the promise of the orchards, on all of which Master Clarke appeared quite at home, and gave ready answers, concluding with an invitation to his friend to his sheep-shearing, which was fixed for that day week.

"Well, expect me, old friend, and commend me to the dame. Merry doings and dainty fare I warrant; and *ad interim*, I'll brush up an old madrigal, or learn a new ditty."

"Nothing like the old ones," interposed Foreright.

"And you think so?" said the lawyer with a smile.

"To be sure I do, and when the old ones are gone, there seldom comes a better. Now, like our king—good as he is, and better he would be, but for the flaunty wenches and Frenchified fellows about him, can't show alongside with the blessed martyr his father; but then it don't always hold good, for when Old Noll went, I don't know where," said the alderman, shaking his head, "we had our neighbour, the Hursley squire, as mock-king, a booby sort of a fellow, so they tell me, but not so bad as the old one. I have heard that he was better in cracking bottles than in cracking pates, and a loyalist to boot at heart."

"I don't think you are far from the mark," replied Master Clarke, whose countenance was somewhat flushed. "And

now, with your good leave, we will drink to the health of King Charles, and confusion to his enemies!"

With this the alderman readily complied, and then made known the object of his errand from Winchester. The town-clerk referred him to the mayor, one Hugh Sampson, whom he would find at the Bowling Green, in company with his friend Parson Farr; and assured him that his worship would render him every assistence.

Foreright now took his leave, but not before he had again scanned the countenance of Master Clarke; and then went his way, under the shade of lofty elms, with his hat in his left hand, whilst his right was employed in rubbing his forehead, as if, by that means, he could conjure up the name of the stranger.

A quarter of an hour's walk along a road, with green pastures to his right and left, brought the alderman in front of Southampton's noble Bargate, with "its rampant lions and thundering warriors." Through it he passed, and entered into what a writer of the period describes as "one of the neatest and compleatest towns in all these western parts," and as having "one street which transcends any other town street in England," with inhabitants "fair, neat, beautiful, straight, and handsome, which by matching and trucking with her foster neighbour islands (Jersey and Guernsey) hath brought them to this perfection."

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOWLING GREEN.

"*Queen:* 'What sport shall we devise here, in this garden,
To drive away the heavy thought of care?'
"*First Lady:* 'Madam, we 'll play at *bowls*.'
"*Queen:* 'Twill make me think
The world is full of *rubs*, and that my fortune
Runs against the *bias*.'"

SHAKESPEARE'S *Richard II.*

If the members of the Southampton Bowling Green knew the precise date of its formation, they would be enabled in a few years to commemorate its third centenary. An ancient map of the town shows the existence of the Green two hun-

dred and fifty years ago. It was, no doubt, an encroachment of that portion of the public lands formerly known as Porter's Mead; and the probability is, that it was enclosed and applied to its present purpose some time in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when bowling greens were appendages to gentlemen's mansions, and the game a favourite recreation, as is shown by the quotation at the commencement of our present chapter.

That this spot was in the year 1635 a resort of the well-to-do inhabitants of Southampton, we have the authority of a writer of that period—"Between that [St. Mary's Church,] and the town walls there are many pleasant gardens, orchards, cherry grounds, and walks, and a fine *bowling green*, where many gentlemen and genteel merchants take their recreations." It was so on the evening of the twenty-fifth of June, 1683, the company being unusually large, to witness a match of three games between six gentlemen, who enjoyed the reputation of being good players.

The green was in capital order, having been mowed and rolled in the morning, and presented a surface almost as level as a billiard table. At its west side there was a spacious alcove, in which the greater portion of the company were seated: and on the other side there was a border filled with old English flowers, sweetwilliams of many colours, bachelors' buttons, yellow and white snap-dragons (or as they are now styled antirrhinums), flaming tiger-lilies, love-and-idles (now pansies), and many others; but a peculiarity of the border was a succession of rose trees at the distance of ten feet from each other, all of which seemed to spring out of clumps of box trees about two feet in height, and all carefully trimmed—one-half in a square form, above which was "the blushing Lancastrian," and the other half in a conical form, and above them bloomed the "pale Yorkist."

Among the company in the alcove we must direct attention to one who sat apart from the rest, in solitary grandeur, with a goblet of claret, and a rich emblazoned snuff-box on the table in front of him. This was Master Thomas Fulghall, *alias* Tom Fall, and more irreverently Tom Fool, the last and inpoverished descendant of a family which had from time to time, during a period of four hundred years, represented Southampton in Parliament. If the wealth of the family had been dissipated or lost, and its influence departed, the pride and vanity of successive generations appeared concentrated in its last descendant. Although Master Fulghall had,

by several years, passed what is called the allotted age of man, he was as vain of his dress and personal appearance, as he could possibly have been whilst yet in his teens. He was now arrayed in the fashion of the day, and aped the beau; and surveyed the green as if it was his property, and the company his inferiors. With very scanty means, he was ever the fine gentleman, and, to be such, did not shrink from keeping Lent all the year round. During the winter months he, like all the butterfly tribe, was seldom seen; and like the snail, kept within his shell, and it was not until his ear had caught the welcome voice of the cuckoo, and his eyes had witnessed the arrival of the swallow, that he ventured out. But then, during the sunny days of summer, every afternoon he would leave his dilapidated old house, with its mouldy furniture, and having taken a turn in the street, visited the quays, and surveyed the shipping, wend his way to the bowling green, and take possession of a chair, which, by common consent, was conceded to him, and was then known as the *throne*. By courtesy, also, he was treated by the members as their president, and as each of them entered the green, would walk towards him and, friendly saluting him, make what the old boy took for a respectful bow; who invariably returned the compliment by rising from his seat, uplifting his hat, presenting his gold snuff-box, making a gracious enquiry, pledging the health of the visitor, wetting his lips with his liquor, and resume his seat; but here ended the familiarity, for he was too well known to the frequenters to stand near him, or they would be regaled for the hundredth time with, "When I was chief magistrate;" "When I had the honour to be mayor;" "When my ancestor Philip de Fulghall was member for the town;" "When the Black Prince knighted Sir Walter de Fulghall," and then an endless dissertation about the comparative antiquity of the families of Fulghall and Fleming, asserting in positive terms that the latter were mushrooms, and not to be mentioned in the same day with the former. Occasionally, when it would suit the humour of one of the players, he was solicited to become the umpire on some disputed point, and then, with assumed modesty, would at first decline the responsibility; then, being a little pressed with sugared words, accept the task, rise with dignity, and with measured step approach the balls as they lay clustered round the jack, and, having carefully surveyed them, make his award, never forgetting to dilate on the laws

of the game, as set forth in King Charles's rules, or as they were recognised by the "Blessed Martyr" when a prisoner at Carisbrook.

The party engaged in the game were Master Horder, the owner and captain of a hoy, which traded between Southampton and the Isle of Wight; Master John Wrangy, *alias* Jack Wrong, the host of the Dolphin, then, as now, one of the principal inns of the town; and the Rev. Philip Farr, *alias* Fitzpawlet, Vicar of St. Michael's, on one side—and Master Hugh Sampson, the worshipful the mayor; Master le Metre, a Jerseyman by birth and now one of the "genteel merchants," and Master Nicholas Guise, *alias* Old Mystery, a retired lawyer, on the other.

Two well and closely-contested games had been played, and the result of the third game depended on the skill of the parson and the lawyer; both were good players, but the latter was the most certain. But it was the fault of the former that such was the case, for he would deliver his balls with inimitable style, had a keen eye, and was a good judge of distance, knew the exact bias of his balls, what ground he should take, and with what force to propel them; so as to reach home and no further, to take out an opponent's ball, or to lodge in the best place to baulk him; but then he always played for diversion's sake, sometimes thoughtlessly, and little caring whether he would win or lose. To the lawyer the game never appeared a pastime, and he would come to the green with the settled purpose of winning, and he laboured at it as if it were a suit which involved life and death. From the beginning to the end of a match he would be always scheming how it might be won; merriment and jokes could not divert him from the object he had in view—a skinful of good liquor at the expense of others.

The parson was tall and stout, with broad shoulders, and a countenance at once of an intellectual and sensual character. The bright eyes, arched brows, high forehead, and the playful expression of the lips, spoke in his behalf, but which was negatived by his huge red nose, and bloated cheeks. Master Farr was from the neighbourhood of Basingstoke, and, by report, was related, in a form not recognised by law, to a famed Hampshire family. He was educated at Oxford, and, at the breaking out of the civil war, threw aside his cap and gown, and enrolled himself as a trooper in behalf of his sovereign; and at Edgehill, Newbury, and Naseby, showed himself

a brave soldier. After the overthrow of the monarchy he obtained a scanty and precarious livelihood as best he could; he was a proscribed man, and a marked malignant. Fifteen years of privation and uncertainty had their effect upon him, for when "the king had regained his own again," and Master Farr was admitted to orders, and, as a reward for his loyalty, nominated to the vicarage of Saint Michael's, he continued, reckless of consequences, living as if there was no to-morrow. He was one, however, that was certain to command a modicum of respect and affection. His heart was in the right place—he was charitable, unassuming, and kind; but his head was giddy, and his brain easily affected. He ever intended right, and was always doing wrong. In addition to his vicarage, he had the mastership of the Grammar School; but those were days of laxity, and his reverence took full advantage of them. Yet, in spite of his manifest shortcomings, no one would say an ill-natured word against Parson Farr: who was regarded as a good-natured fool, and as no one's enemy but his own.

The lawyer was the antipode of the parson, a little shrunken mortal, with hollow cheeks, and diminutive grey eyes, deep set in the head, with a peculiar downward tendency, a low retreating forehead, and a countenance expressive of suspicion and low cunning. He was ever on the alert to take advantage, and was so very circumspect and mysterious in the ordinary occurrences of life, that it gained for him, whilst yet a young man, the title of "Old Mystery." Although his legal acquirements were but small, he had turned them to good account, and had imposed on many that he was a very learned man. He was of few words, never hazarded an opinion, professed to know nothing of religious or state affairs, stood aloof from all party; and, though retired from business, was sly and mysterious.

Of late years he had assumed a sanctified appearance, but in reality loved cards and dice, and late hours, as well as the parson; but, unlike the parson, he was never jolly; and who was apt to say of him that he was the lineal descendant of the famous Pharisee that went up to the Temple to pray.

Master Hugh Sampson, the mayor, and thriving blacksmith, Above Bar, was of age double fives; six-feet-two in height; and of such a sinewy frame as would lead people to think that he was descended from his renowned namesake, nor was the impression without foundation.

In his younger days he was famed for feats of strength—

> "His fame through all the country ran,
> In reputation he was *solus*."

He could carry heavier weights, and hurl larger stones and bars of iron to a greater distance than any man in the county; and a sledge-hammer, which would tax the powers of many to lift, and all to wield, was in his hands almost a plaything, and at times he would whiz round his head with fearful velocity.

Master Sampson was a self-made man, and the power of his mind, had it received due cultivation, would have been only inferior to the power of his arm. He was by nature fond of athletic sports; wrestling, single-sticks, nine-pins, and all the rough pastimes of the period, he was in his youth familiar with: but he had a cool head, and took care that his fondness for them should not stand in the way, and divert him from his design of gaining a standing in the town, to which he came literally without a penny in his pocket.

He obtained employment in the same smithy which now owns him as its master; and, then, his bodily strength was his principal, if not his sole, recommendation. He, however, soon made himself useful, and picked up the rudiments of the craft. He was industrious, painstaking, and trustworthy; and though, like other youngsters, he loved a holiday and observed all tide-times, he never abused the licence. Big-Hug, as he was then called, grew in favour with his master, and to him was committed the shoeing of all restive horses.

When he had been rather more than a year in the smithy, he begged for a week's holiday, which was readily granted by his master, though accompanied by the expression, "I don't know what I shall do without thee, Hug."

And Hug went his way, no one knew whither; but on that day week returned to Southampton, with a buxom country wench as his wife.

The truth of it was that Hugh and his wife had long been sweethearts, both natives of the distant village of Headley. She was the daughter of a small farmer, while he was a mere labourer, who at times assisted the blacksmith of the village. The course of true love is said never to run smooth, and father and mother both frowned on the match. There is pride everywhere—Hugh was forbidden the house, and stolen interviews were prevented. He then determined to leave home and seek his fortune, whilst his mistress agreed to wait

for him the full term of three years. Our hero wandered north, east, south, and west, in search of the fickle goddess, who, moved at length by his untiring spirit, directed his steps to Southampton, where he arrived with blistered feet, a hungry stomach, and an empty pocket.

Means of communication between places were then difficult, and still more difficult to a couple neither of whom could read or write; but nearly one year out of the three had yet to run, when Hugh made his appearance in his native place. His gay attire and improved appearance rendered him the admiration of all the lasses, and the envy of all the lads of the village, and Hugh was as well pleased with the one as the other. He waited upon the old folks, showed them the golden guineas and silver crowns he had saved, and painted such a pleasing picture of his future prospects as to remove their objections, and the young people became man and wife.

"Father," said he in parting, "come when you will to Hampton and you shall be welcome—bed and board, as long as you like to stay; and I don't say that one of these days I shan't be mayor."

"What, my boy! mayor! why that be head man of all! Do ye hear, mother? do ye hear? mayor! Lord have mercy on us! I should love that, and then, like old Jacob, my grey hairs would go down in peace to the grave."

"And so they shall, father; I will be mayor of Hampton, or my name is not Hugh Sampson, and I hav'nt married Nancy Trundel; and you shall see me in my red gown and golden chain—mayor of Southampton I will be."

"God bless thee, boy—I hope so," and they parted.

There is many a true word spoken in a joke, and many a joke becomes an earnest; and so it was with Hugh, for the recollection of what he had said so floated in his mind, that at length he believed that he was predestinated to be mayor of Southampton. He became still more industrious and painstaking, gained more and more in the confidence of his employer; and, at his death, was entrusted with the management of the business for his widow, who dying, a few years afterwards, he succeeded to it.

And he now resolved to increase it by what, at that time, was considered a bold adventure: namely, by engaging, at higher wages than was then given, superior workmen; nor did he reckon without his host, for what by his own pushing and indomitable perseverance, he induced the farmers of the

neighbourhood rather to resort to his well-stored smithy and skilful craftsmen for their implements of husbandry, than to rely on the jog-trot work of their village Vulcans.

Years rolled on, and he became a man of mark and reputed wealth, and the distance between him and the civic chair was greatly lessened, so he now thought that he may venture to dabble in affairs of state.

A good opportunity offered. Southampton, then, as now, had its two parties: not Whigs and Tories, Liberals and Conservatives, but Bowlers and Rowlers—the derivation of which has puzzled many an antiquary; but perhaps we are not far from the truth in considering the Bowlers as the Conservatives, and Rowlers the Liberals of the period. The Bowlers were then in the ascendancy, and formed a very large majority of the corporation. It so happened that an influential person of the party had made an encroachment on the public lands, which came under the cognizance of the Court Leet Jury, of which Sampson was foreman; but the sheriff declared it was no encroachment, and refused to enter the judgment of the jury. This would not suit Sampson's idea on the subject, and he took upon himself to remove the encroachment, and challenged the encroacher to seek his remedy. The matter was brought before the mayor and aldermen, who wished to compromise it, and gave the encroacher leave again to enclose the ground, on the payment of an annual rent to the corporation. Hugh was not satisfied, and appealed to his fellow-townsmen; and then, accompanied by a large force, again removed the encroachment. He was next indicted at the sessions for a riot; the trial came on before the recorder; a packed jury returned a verdict of guilty, and he was sentenced to be placed in the stocks for one hour. "With all my heart, your learnedship, and when in my smithy a hand is wanted to blow the fire into a blaze, I'll send for you," ejaculated the blacksmith.

The town-stocks stood under a huge old elm, known in those times as "the Pound tree," and within but a very few feet of Sampson's house and smithy. When the news was brought to his wife, she sobbed bitterly, and appeared almost broken-hearted; but it was very different with Hugh, who felt that his foot was on the first round of the ladder which he had to ascend, and was prepared to endure any present degradation, assured that the malice of his enemies would recoil against themselves; and submitted to his sentence with a smile and a chuckle.

The sheriff, one of the most servile adherents of his party, resolved that the sentence should be carried into execution without loss of time, and before any excitement should prevail, and gave the necessary orders to the town-sergeants. In the meantime the Rowlers had not been idle, the news had spread like wildfire; and in all parts of the town was to be heard the cry, "To the rescue! to the rescue!" Carpenters left their benches, tailors jumped from their boards, cobblers rose from their seats, smiths threw down their tools, and boatmen left the shore, and made their way to the Bar-gate. To effect a rescue would have been a very easy task, but Sampson would not hear of it; "No, my boys; give them rope enough, and they'll stumble over their own yarn."

With a town-sergeant on each side of him, and followed by the sheriffs and two bailiffs, he now proceeded to where the stocks had hitherto stood, but instead of finding them deeply morticed into the earth, they were lying on the shoulders of eight stalwart men, and as many more placed Sampson in a chair obtained for the purpose; and then the whole mass of people, forming themselves into a procession, paraded the town amidst shouting and singing.

The Rowlers were triumphant, and the Bowlers shrunk into holes and corners. Street after street was traversed by the excited but not ill-disposed populace, the engine of proposed punishment preceding the hero of the day. Before the houses of the influential Bowlers the Rowlers would make a temporary halt, and having raised a yell would pass on. At last they reached the residence of the mayor, with whom the recorder and some of the aldermen were dining; and in the middle of the street, in front of it, were the stocks deposited, and a quantity of straw, shavings, and light wood having been obtained, a fire was enkindled, and the hulk consumed, amidst the shouts and laughter of the congregated multitude, who frequently invited his worship and his friends to come out and see the bonfire.

Amidst all the excitement of the occasion Sampson was cool and collected; and, when the cumbersome engine had become a shapeless cinder, and the shouting subsided, he proceeded to address his friends, in such a homely way, with such trite expressions, and with such allusions to the lowness of his origin—of his being a working man, and ever would be the friend of working men, that he rivetted their attention. He made no pretensions to oratory, but dealt many hard hits

at those he called the feather-beds, and skilfully tickled the passions and the prejudices of the horny hands. He thanked them for their kindness; he could never forget it, if he lived as long as Methuselah; and he was resolved that no one should get into trouble on his account; and therefore, he should go to the sheriff, and surrender himself.

"No, no," was the cry; but go he would—and go he did.

There is nothing like taking the bull by the horns by those who possess sufficient physical strength and moral courage, and Sampson was equal to the task. Within an hour he waited upon the sheriff, told him he would submit to his sentence whenever called upon; but at the same time warned him of the consequences which would probably ensue: "You have seen the temper of the people; they will have no cruelty or injustice; and if you seek to carry out the recorder's sentence, the harm must be on his and your heads."

The sheriff communicated with the mayor and recorder, and the next day it was buzzed about the town that Sampson, and some others concerned in the destruction of the stocks, were to be indicted at the assizes at Winchester; but the ruling powers of Southampton knew better, and nothing was done.

Behold him now, the undisputed tribune of the people, and the recognised leader of the democracy of Southampton. He was well fitted for the post, being shrewd, bold, and persevering, always cool and collected, and never to be thrown off his guard, or lose his temper. And then he assumed no authority; and whilst he knew he was the captain-general—nay, the dictator of his party—he made his followers believe that he considered himself only as one of them: and to all it was, "Well, Tom;" "Well, Dick;" "Well, Charley;" "Well, my boy;" "Well, my lad;" and "Well, old fellow."

Whilst the corporation shrunk from bringing the matter to trial at the assizes, the Rowlers, under the guidance of their captain, agitated at vestry meetings and at the annual Court Leets the question of encroachments on the public lands; and though, in some cases, they were defeated, they continued the contest with such pertinacity that they regained considerable portions of land which had been enclosed as private property.

Nor was this public agitation without its personal benefit to the chief agitator, who had wit enough to turn all things to account. He was the talk of the town and country round,

and strangers and neighbouring squires and farmers could not but hear of the wonderful exploits of this second "Bevois of Hampton," and many were anxious to have a sight and a chat with the live lion. The live lion was always glad to see them, to tell them of what he had done, and what he intended to do; and then it was told with such glee, and in such an odd, yet earnest manner, which seldom failed to impress upon his hearers that he was something extraordinary; and he had also the tact of turning these visits to account; the merits of the contents of the smithy were dilated upon, that they often found purchasers, so that many who went to see the live lion paid for their peep.

In the meantime the disputes between the Bowlers and Rowlers waxed warmer and warmer; but there were evident signs of a reaction in the town. Some of the former were disgusted with the constant squabbles; others who had supported the aristocratic party, because the sun shone on that side of the hedge, did not hesitate to budge through it, unmindful of thorns and brambles; whilst others were proud and stomachy, and by constant defeats rendered more so. Thus stood matters when, at a meeting of the corporation, it was proposed that Hugh Sampson, and two others of the Rowler party, should be elected to the body. It was thought to be a capital move: that it would detach the leaders from their party, and that they would soon become as aristocratic and exclusive as themselves. But Hugh was too sure-footed to stumble up stairs, and shrewdly divined he was not elected for love, but for some ulterior object.

He accepted the honour, thanked the members of the corporation for the compliment they had paid him; and then let them know they were mistaken in their man. For a time he was treated with contumely, and had to fight his way; whilst his unpolished manners, and his quaint and homely sayings excited merriment. But, he had a tit for every tat, and a Rowland for every Oliver: and by his witty rejoinders, and an unsparing use of epithets, such as would stick to the persons at whom they were directed, made himself feared; but, as he never indulged in them unless provoked, and as whatever he said seemed but the effusion of the moment—a sort of oral knock me-down blow, containing not a single ingredient of malice, and after the warmest debate was always friendly and sociable, the Bowlers began to think that Hugh was not altogether so bad a fellow: that it was only his

rough way, and that it would be their best policy to be friends instead of enemies; and the consequence was that he was first elected junior bailiff, the next year senior bailiff, the third year sheriff, and the fourth year mayor of Southampton.

Now to the game.—Towards the south-east angle of the green laid a golden jack, only used when the mayor was among the players, otherwise one painted white served the purpose. The game stood eight all, nine up. Eight balls had already been played, and it only remained for the lawyer and parson to deliver theirs. By present appearances the chances were greatly in favour of the former, and bets of three to one were made in the alcove. The mayor and Master Le Metre had placed their balls in capital positions, three of them were towards the front of the jack, but a short distance from it, forming a crescent for its protection, all of them capable of promotion (should they be touched by the last players), and the remaining ball about a foot behind the jack, so should it be moved on it would probably be the bowler ball: whilst, on the other side, those of Master Horder had gone forth without regard to either latitude or longitude, the course of the one having been too wide, and the other too narrow; and there they laid, one of them three yards to the right, and the other the like distance to the left of the jack; and Master Wrangy proved he well-deserved the title of Jack Wrong, he having delivered his first ball with such force that it rolled off the green, and was, therefore, accounted as "down among the dead men;" whilst in the delivery of his second, and in seeking to avoid the error of the first, he used so little force that the ball did not reach much more than half-way home, and there it lay like an outpost—a protection to his adversary's balls.

It was now the lawyer's turn, and carefully did he survey the ground, and twisted his head from side to side, to see how his ball would best approach the jack. He then took up one of his balls, which he turned several times over in his hands, and again surveyed the ground.

"Plenty of room to the right," exclaimed the mayor who was standing close to the jack, "and take bias enough."

But the lawyer was deaf, and not to be diverted, and played his own game, and the ball came from his hand with no very seeming exertion on his part, and rolled over the green sward, whilst he twisted his head from side to side, to watch its progress, but he said not a word.

Not so, however, the mayor.

"Too narrow, by Jingo. Legs! legs! he'll never get home; he will lodge on my ball. No, no—all well. Right, to a dodkin. Bravo, Master Guise—a jack-header!"—and there did the ball stop, in close contact with the jack.

The lawyer was still silent, but he slowly twisted his head over his left shoulder, to have one of his sly looks at the parson.

"Humph! Master Guise, you have usurped my function, and celebrated matrimony; now I must turn lawyer, and cause a divorce. Do you know any just cause or impediment?

But his reverence failed. The ground where the jack laid was peculiar, and his adversary's balls were to him awkwardly placed, and should his own dislodge the lawyer's, the chances were that it would force the jack nearer the hind ball. His success as much depended upon force nicely balanced, as on a right direction. His ball had a right direction, but it wanted powder; and, instead of reaching the jack, stopped eighteen inches short of it, and gave it still further protection.

The lawyer now prepared to deliver his second ball, his own first ball being bowler, and almost safe, yet he resolved to make surety double sure by placing the second in a position so as to baulk his opponent; and well he performed the task. The ball stealthily escaped his hands, and crept up the green followed by the bowler, who twisted his body from side to side, as if he were directing it with an invisible pair of reins, and it stopped just where he wanted it, immediately in front of the parson's ball.

His reverence now eyed the chances of the game, and shook his head. At every point he appeared to be shut out by the enemy, and where it was most vulnerable, there was his partner's short ball to baulk him. Yet he was well-pleased, for he loved an up-hill fight, stroked his rubicund nose, rubbed his hands, shrugged his shoulders, and then marked his chance. By taking the left bias it would be impossible to get in, and he must, therefore, attempt the right. He was "the observed of all observers," and he knew it; then, with a triumphant toss of the head, he gave a wink to the company in the alcove, and, with a jerk of his thumb, pointed to the lawyer, whose eyes were fixed on his own ball, and exclaimed: "Archbishop of Canterbury, or a white sheet and a lighted candle," and the ball sprung from his hand, bounded up the green, and banged against the lawyer's second ball, with such force as caused it to bang against his first ball, and off they spun, one to the right and the other to the left, whilst

the jack gently rolled into the embrace of his reverence's first ball.

"Bowler, bowler," sings out Adam Horder.

"Bowler, bowler," responded Jack Wrong, in a still louder tone.

"Capital play!" says the mayor.

"Luck, mere luck," whispered the lawyer, turning up the whites of his eyes.

"The devil take luck," replied his worship; "it will be ours to-morrow. We have had our fun, and must pay for it. Halloa, tapster, the claret—my throat's a dry."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VOYAGE.

"Happy the child whose tender years
Receives instruction well."

DR. WATTS.

BEFORE a second match could be arranged, two strangers made their appearance. The first was our ancient friend, Foreright; and the other, a lad about ten years of age, whom he accidentally met in the street, and of whom he enquired the way, and who, in return, kindly offered to conduct him to his proposed destination. The youth had a pale face, as if he were much addicted to study, and had neglected exercise and childish pastime; but he had a high and expansive forehead, eyes, in which there was a peculiar mild lustre, whilst his whole countenance was expressive of intelligence.

"Yonder gentleman with the ball in his hand is the mayor," said the lad, pointing to Sampson, "so good-bye, sir."

"Stay—stay, my young friend, one good turn deserves another: so here is something for your kindness and trouble," replied the elder, tendering a piece of money.

"No, sir; I can't receive payment for the performance of Christian duty," rejoined the youth, with a smile and a gentle shake of the head.

"Humph! humph!" ejaculated Foreright, with a stare of astonishment. "Is the world coming to an end? I don't

want services without paying for them. So here, my lad," doubling his previous offer, "is what will buy ye a bat and ball, and that will please ye, I warrant."

"Not half so much as a Greek Testament," spoke out the parson, who had accompanied the mayor across the green.

"You know the lad?" enquired Foreright.

"Ah, that I do! and I am as proud of him as Southampton will be some day, should his life be spared. He is my aptest scholar, the flower of the flock, though he is the youngest of a score of boys; but then it is book, book, book—morning, noon, and night—eh, little Isaac!"

Isaac had not a word to say, but hung down his head and blushed at the compliments of his master, who went on—

"A good boy, gentle as a lamb, and as docile and as fond as a spaniel. I would that he had not such a sour crout of a father, a conventical man, that sets up to be a second Jeremiah, and threatens us with vengeance on our sins. You know him," turning to the mayor, who hesitated.

"Why, not Watts, of Simnel-street?" replied the parson, with surprise. "He keeps a day-school for boys, and sometimes ventures to hold forth on what he calls 'the blessed Sabbath.' Eh, man!"

"And a worthy fellow he is," replied the mayor. "I have known him many a year; and, although his means be humble, he does much good, though his notions are too tight for such worldly dogs as we are. Wasn't he imprisoned for preaching at the Proclamation-place; and wasn't he nearly a year in God's House Tower; and didn't his wife sit on the steps of the prison, suckling her babe? I remember it, as if it were but yesterday!"

"And that babe is this very boy," said the parson. "I have never lost sight of him, though he be of a puritanical breed; he is a rare youth—writes verses and hymns. We will have one of them presently. But, now, pray attend to the gentleman who waits upon your worship."

It did not take long for Foreright to explain his errand; and the mayor immediately promised him his assistance, and that not only every part of the town should be traversed, but that every vessel in the river should be examined for the missing man.

In the meantime, the parson continued in familiar chat with his favourite scholar, whom he scolded for being too bookish, and for not joining his schoolmates in their games

and diversions. Why had he not gone with Tom Scrump and Ned Hall, to hunt the badger on the common? Why did he not take part in the wrestling match at Crabniton? or gone with Phil Thorpe, and have a swim from West Quay to Cracknore Hard? To all of which the other replied, in a modest but firm tone—that the first was cruel, the second dangerous, and the third venturesome. The parson took the answers in good part, shrugged his shoulders, and went on—

"Well, Mr. Philosopher, what say you to a game of bowls? This can't be said to be either cruel, or dangerous; aye, and what is more, that old ear-cropped Prynne, of whom your dad thinks so much, has not included it in his list of enormities—such as stage plays, masques, bear-baiting, and cock-fighting. Besides, we have good examples—old Father Luther loved a match at bowls, as well as he did a flagon of Rhenish wine, or a pretty nun; and, as I have been told, even lanthorn-jawed Calvin would relax his hard studies with a game; to say nothing of our blessed martyr, the late King Charles, though your father does not reverence his memory as he ought."

"Nay, you are unjust and cruel, sir," replied the youth in a serious tone. "My father always speaks of the late king with pity and respect, and I have known the tears roll down his cheeks when he told us children of his sad fate and many misfortunes. Yes, indeed sir, the king has not a more faithful subject than my father, and one who duly teaches his children to fear God and honour the king."

At this moment the mayor was inquiring for some person whom he might send in search of the sergeants'-at-mace, upon which little Isaac offered his service.

"Thank ye, you are a brave boy, but hardly man enough I think. You would forget half the message."

"I'll be his surety, your worship," exclaimed the parson, "that he will remember and deliver your message truly, be it as long as a proclamation, or the One-hundred-and-nineteenth Psalm."

"If that be so, we'll trust him; but has he town-knowledge enough to find the sergeants. They have strange hiding holes."

"Again I will warrant him; he is as persevering and as true-scented as a beagle."

"Then be it so," replied the mayor, who thereupon gave his directions to the lad.

"And now, Master Mercury," said the parson, "before you

start take a sip of wine, it will increase your speed and sharpen your wit."

"But not improve my understanding, sir," replied the youth, "and that no time may be lost—I am off;" and he left the green.

More than an hour elapsed between the departure of Isaac and the arrival of the town-sergeants. The mayor insisted that Foreright should consider himself his guest, whilst the whole company were anxious to learn the news from Winchester, for at that time the inhabitants of the two towns had but little communication with each other. Foreright, in the whole course of his long life, had but three times visited Southampton, whilst there were some present who had never been to Winchester. It was, however, different with lawyer Guise, who invariably attended the assizes, from the opening of the commission till the close of the last case; returning home with all the news, and, what he called, the keys of the hall in his pocket. He now enquired for Brother Fidge, Brother Snapem, and Brother Grape, all learned in law; then for the worthy hall-keeper, Master Polonious Bunting; then for the hosts of the Dolphin, Red-Hat, and Royal Oak, where he was wont to spend his evenings; and not forgetting some second cousins, and old acquaintances, to nearly all of which questions Foreright was enabled to return an answer. But the chief point of conversation related to the gay doings of the preceding day, when his majesty was enrolled as a freeman of the city, and entered as a member of the corporation. Our ancient friend warmed with his subject, his eyes glistened, and cheeks glowed, whilst with his tongue he related the day's proceedings; and then he would chuckle and laugh, and throw back his head in conscious pride, and real triumph.

His worship, who for some time had been twisting himself about as if he were uncomfortable, now spoke out, "I say, your reverence, this won't do. His majesty a citizen of Winchester and not a burgess of Hampton; but we will have him here—no matter what the cost—aye, if we sell all the bells in our churches, and our Common and Lammas lands to boot. Hampton can spend a crown to a Winchester penny. We must and will do it well. We will make him mayor, recorder, and sheriff, all at once, so that we be a match for that tumble-down old place."

"Tumble-down place," mumbled Foreright; and it taxed the full powers of his mind to keep his feelings under.

"Penny or pound we mus'nt be beaten, and we won't."

"But you will," replied the parson, with a laugh, "you can't make head against tide, wind, and current. Now go and see if any of your darling patriots, the canny Whigs, can or will help you!"

"What mean you, man?"

"Plain things, your worship, and such as you can't get over. You have made your bread with mortar instead of yeast, and it will not rise, ha! ha! ha!"

"Master Parson, if you are not in your cups, you are in a dream," spoke the mayor, angrily.

"Aye, like some of those that we do read of, that they did dream, and what was fancy in the night, was reality in the morning."

"Again, I say, what do you mean?"

"Are you not the captain-general, the Great Mogul, the grand and self-made Pope of all the rowlers and mobbers of Hampton; and are you not their king, lords, commons, and bell-wether, all in one?"

"No; I am plain Hugh Sampson the blacksmith—brought up to hard work; never went to school; came to this town without a penny in my pocket; and now I am mayor—thanks to my own industry, and not forgetting the rowlers and mobbers, as you call them. They know wheat from barley better than any Oxford parson; and, if I am their man, 'tis because they know I will stand up for the rights of industry. I like horny hands better than bleached paws."

"No offence, your worship, I have nought to say against you. All that you have got, you have fairly earned; but 'tis your party that has brought things to such a pretty pass. You have banged the door against good Fortune, and she is a skittish jade."

"Come, plain English, and none of your jabber, if you will talk!"

"Why, then, you mean to invite his majesty to come to Hampton, and accept the freedom of the town."

"Aye, and so he ought."

"So you say, but do you think that his majesty has no bowels of compassion to be moved for his kith and kin; and forgets that, at the last election, you sent Fleming and Worsley adrift, because they wouldn't pledge themselves to vote for the exclusion and banishment of his brother the Duke of York; and that you elected two strangers, of whom you knew

nothing, except that my Lord Russell and that Mottisfont baronet, Sir Richard Mill, wrote to say they were staunch Protestants and exclusionists?"

"We did our duty as free men and good Protestants. We will have no Popish king! and I shouldn't like to see a regiment of Jesuits quartered in the town."

"But where are they to come from?" said the parson laughing.

The mayor was puzzled, and scratched his head.

"Where? where? the devil knows, I don't; from Spain, I suppose, or else from Ireland; but we all know they have dealings with the Evil One, and he will help them in any of their hellish tricks and plans to upset Protestantism and pure religion;" and, then, thinking it easier to act on the offensive than the defensive, exclaimed, "I have long suspected thee, Parson Farr, of being a Jesuit in disguise; and, if I had done my duty, you would be now a prisoner in God's House Tower."

"I am ready to go, your worship, and then his majesty will make me a freeman of Hampton, whilst your own chance will be more desperate that ever."

"If you are not already a Jesuit in disguise, you would turn to-morrow if it would serve your purpose."

"Perhaps I might," replied the parson, with a laugh, "but this I promise you, I will not turn Papist until I can get a dispensation from the Pope not to keep Lent or Advent, or to pay any respects to old Mother Ember, who comes hobbling round four times a year. I have a great abhorrence of fasting, but I am ready to keep all the feasts; and if his Holiness were to appoint me to some convent to instruct the virgins, and comfort the widows, I should be well pleased."

"Now, I believe you," replied the mayor.—"But who have we here? I see. Well, Tom, what news have you to tell us?" speaking to the first of the two sergeants, who had just made their appearance, with red cheeks, watery eyes, and staggering steps.

"Please your worship, Ned Hopkins and myself have not been idle—no grass has grown under our shoes, your worship; but pretty tirey work, this hot weather: and makes one a-dry."

"The old story; but what luck?"

"Famous, your worship, I should say so; should you not, Ned?"

The other nodded—tried to stand steady—looked grave, and then wiped his mouth with his hand.

"We had lots of dodging before we could catch the right scent all over the town, in and out of every street; but having caught the scent we went on like hounds in full cry; but it was trimming hot work, your worship."

"Come, finish your story, and then you shall moisten your throat."

"Why, then, your worship, after we had been here and there till our legs were ready to drop off, we agreed to go up to the Cowherds, since the fellow must have passed by it in coming from Winchester; and up we goes!—a longish step, your worship. Well, what should you think we did see?—nothing less than our town-clerk and a strange gentleman smoking and drinking under King John's oak! I say it, your worship."

"Well, what of that? Go on."

"'Twas I spied them first. No; it was Ned Hopkins. No, it was I—there, then, I don't know who it was; but Ned Hopkins says—'That's the man we want.' I says 'No; that is an old man with white locks, and we have to find a youngster with black hair!' But Ned Hopkins wouldn't have it, and so he went up to him, and told him he was his prisoner; that he must come along in the king's name, before the mayor, and answer for himself: and, then, I did think that Ned Hopkins was right, for the old fellow turned as white as a smock, and shook like an aspen leaf: and so I says to Ned Hopkins, 'Bring him along;' when up jumps the town-clerk, who dashes his pipe to the ground, so that it broke into a thousand pieces, and threatened to kick us both back into town; and then' continued Tom in a whisper, 'your worship knows that Ned Hopkins is mouthy when he is beery; and so he was then, and so he is now; look at him."

"Something like pot calling kettle black," muttered the mayor.

"Ned Hopkins was in a mighty passion, and says to Mr. Town-clerk, 'we have only one king in Hampton, and he's a jolly blacksmith, and not a parchment scrawler like you.' Then didn't Master Town-clerk laugh—leaning his broad back against the tree, and holding his sides a-laughing. I thought he would have bu'sted, and died before he left off a-laughing."

"But he did leave off, I suppose," said the mayor.

"Aye he did at last, your worship, but not under a quarter of an hour, and then, because Ned Hopkins shouldn't be mouthy again, I made a civil speech to him, and told him we were in search of a stranger who had come from Winchester, whom your worship wanted to find; and then Master Town-clerk said he knew all about it, and that we had best go to the water-side and make inquiry for him there; and that he did know was certain, for his say and young Watts's say were both alike."

"But the young dog told I," spoke Hopkins, "the person we were to look for was sixty years old, and had white locks."

"You rascal," exclaimed the parson, "say that again, and I will cudgel you till your skin is black and blue. Young Watts never said so."

"If he didn't I must have dreamt it; if it wasn't Mother Scottle's hot waters that turned my brain."

"Come, finish this long story," said the mayor impatiently.

"Well, the strange gentleman was very friendly, and gave us some drink, and we should have had a smoke, only the town-clerk bundled us off; and then that Ned Hopkins did grumble all the way back about being ordered by a paper-spoiler."

"Well, did you go straight to the shore?"

"We came into the town, but that Ned Hopkins was such a thirsty soul that he would call in at this house, and then at that."

"And you drank with him."

"When he had ordered the liquor I could but help him out with it. At last we got to the quay, and went into the 'Mermaid' and there, as luck would have it, was Tom Ings the boatman, telling how well he got paid in the morning for taking a smart young chap over to Netley. He said he was tall, with black hair and gay clothes, though they looked as if they had not been off his back all night."

"That be Maurice, shouted Foreright, "but how am I to get there?"

"I'll take you, old boy," replied the mayor, "if you think the young fellow mentioned by the sergeant is your friend."

"I am sure of it—I am sure of it. Safe as the cathedral tower."

"Then we will start at once. I have a boat lying at the West Quay, which will carry us over the water in less time than playing an end of bowls, if the tide will serve."

"Tide and wind are alike in your favour," spoke the parson.

"And you shall go with us as helmsman, and I will handle the oars and manage the sails," replied his worship; and then turning to the sergeants, "you, Tom Thorpe, go across to the West Quay and bring the boat round; and you, Ned Hopkins, go up to my house, and tell missus to give you my best coat, and the periwig that came home on Saturday night; and the silver oar, for I am admiral of the coast, and I may as well show my authority. And, mind ye, tell the dame I shall have some friends to supper, so she had best cook the gammon of the ginger hog, and pick a good dish of beans; and mind me, Ned Hopkins, no more moistening of the throat till you have done your work."

Within half an hour the voyagers were standing on that portion of the Southampton shore which tradition has long pointed out as the spot on which King Canute rebuked the flattery of his courtiers, who had told him that the sea was at his command, and that the rolling waves would obey his orders. They were awaiting the arrival of the town-sergeant, when the parson sought to amuse Foreright with the particulars of the legend, but to the old man the tale was familiar, with an addition of which his reverence was ignorant; namely, that from that day Canute never again wore his crown, but ordered it to be suspended over the crucifix above the high altar of Winchester Cathedral. In less time than his worship had allowed, Ned Hopkins arrived with the insignia of naval jurisdiction, and his coat and periwig; and shortly afterwards Tom Thorpe and boat were seen approaching along the shore from the west. Foreright, who had never been on the sea or in a boat, save in those broad-bottomed ones which were in occasional use on the Itchen, did not much relish the thought of venturing his life in the little thing before him; but he sought to conceal his fears, and put a bold face on what he could not avoid feeling to be danger. His companions watched his countenance; and the parson from mere levity of disposition was prepared to have some fun at the expense of the old man, but was checked therein by the mayor, who by a stern glance informed him that he was master. The boat arrived, and the silver oar and other articles were safely deposited; the sergeants left, and the mayor, parson, and Foreright, got into it, the latter with as firm a step as the two others.

The distance to the landing-place at Netley was two miles;

and all things promised a pleasant run. The sun, which was now direct west and in a cloudless sky, gilded the lofty spires and church towers of the town; gave to the emerald waves the brightness of a mirror, and redoubled beauty to the hanging woods which fringe the sides of the Southampton estuary. Such an expanse of water and pleasing scenery the old man had never seen, and he turned from side to side, though never relaxing his hold of the boat's side, in order to feast his eyes. The motion of the boat he could not understand, and the least plunge created a sensation of dread which he sought to cover by laughing and talking—"This jolty-jolt calls my memory three-score years back, when I used to ride see-saw, with Nanny Pope and Will Tombs."

The parson was full of his banter, which Foreright took in good part, and listened with seeming credulity to his strange stories of the dangers of the deep—"Well, if it do come, let it come; I have had a long innings, three score and ten, wanting one; I can be spared; I might as well die here as on a bed, but I should not like the fishes to eat me up."

"Why not, sir; it will be all the same when life's gone."

"Ha, man; ha, man, 'tis lucky 'tis I, and not old Morley, our bishop, that heard you say so."

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, my name is not Jack Foreright, if his lordship wouldn't have the gown from off your back; but mum's the word, I'm no tattler."

"But why object to giving the fish a meal, perhaps a whale is following you, as he did Jonah."

"Humph, whether he does or does not, I can't tell, but this I know—I should like to be buried with the Forerights of ten generations, on Giles Hill, near our city. I am the last, the very last of them. I should like to keep them company, that we may all rise together at the last day."

His reverence then turned the subject, and was amused by the simple enquiries of the traveller, and the run was almost accomplished, when Foreright caught sight of the west-end of the abbey chapel, which had hitherto been concealed from his sight by a cluster of trees; he started on his feet, and laid hold of the mast to support himself, whilst he exclaimed

"Ha! that is something to look at; save Old Trinity, that beats every church I ever did see."

"Take your seat, man, or you will beat us all," said the mayor.

"And give the fish a supper," rejoined the parson.

Upon which Foreright returned to his seat, and regained his hold of the side of the boat, and within five minutes they were ashore at Netley Castle, one of those small forts erected on the southern shore by Henry VIII.

CHAPTER IX.

NETLEY ABBEY.

Glo'ster to Buckingham:

"'Catesby hath sounded Hastings in our business;
And finds the testy gentleman so hot,
That he will lose his head ere give consent,
His master's child, as worshipfully he terms it,
Shall lose the royalty of England's throne.'"

SHAKESPEARE'S *Richard III.*

NETLEY ABBEY, which is now only known from its picturesque ruins, and as the resort of pic-nic parties, was at the period of our tale the retreat of an English nobleman, the descendant of William Lord Hastings, of whom our historians make such honourable mention.

At the dissolution of the religious houses in the reign of our eighth Henry, the Abbey of Netley, *alias* Latelie, *alias* Edwardstow, with its several manors, was obtained by that very accommodating statesman, William Paulett, first Marquis of Winchester; and subsequently passed into the family of the Seymours, Earls of Hertford. Soon after the expulsion of the monks the abbey was fitted up as a private residence, which was occupied up to the time of the Restoration, when it was deserted, and allowed to fall into decay. The exterior still presented its pristine form and beauty, but its interior had been most strangely metamorphosed during the space of one hundred and twenty years. The abbot's apartments had lost every trace of a monastic character; the chapter-house had been converted into a kitchen; the refectory into stables; the cloisters, with the dormitories over them, had been pulled down; and their site, with its spacious quad-

rangle, was now an an open space, known as the "Fountain court," probably from an aqueduct, more grotesque than elegant, which occupied its centre; whilst its noble chapel, two hundred feet in length and of proportionate height, supported by clustered columns, had been partially divided by rough wood-work into compartments, one of which was used as a chapel, its own furniture consisting of a pulpit and a few antique benches; whilst another portion had been desecrated by being converted into a tennis-court, then among the games and pastimes more resorted to than at present.

Theophilus, seventh Earl of Huntingdon, was as warmly attached to "the sovereign rule;" and as much opposed to "fantastic giddy change" as was his ancestor; but unfortunately had not moral courage to withstand the temptations of a wicked and corrupt court. Vice is said to carry its own punishment along with it, and by the time he had reached the age of twenty-eight, he found that one-third of his family estates had entirely passed out of his hands; and the remainder was so encumbered, that he could neither maintain his position among his gay companions, nor the honour of his family at home. He now resolved upon a reform of life, to retrench expenses, and hide himself for a time in some distant country. "Twice seven years," he said, "I have given to the devil, but the next seven shall be given to repentance." For this purpose, having made his uncle the trustee of his estates, he bade farewell to Leicestershire, and travelled southward; and the Abbey of Netley having been offered to him at a little more than a nominal rent, he took it for the period of seven years. His household, in addition to occasional assistance, consisted of two persons, Ashby Humphrey—an old servant of his father, and who now stood in the position of half servant and half companion, joining him on equal terms in the sports of the field, the bowling green, the tennis-court, and the more sedentary amusements of fox and goose, tables now known as backgammon, and even chess; but cards and dice never made their appearance—and an aged housekeeper. With the world at large his lordship had but little communication, for he received no company, was happy in himself, and exhibited no desire to break the monotony of his retreat. The only letters which he received, were those on business from his uncle and trustee, and an occasional one from his friend the Duke of York, to whom he was warmly attached: so that, in the next reign, he was in high

favour, and after the Revolution was imprisoned for his devotion to the cause of the exiled monarch.

It was at the noontide hour of a brilliant summer's day, in the fifth year of his retreat, that the earl was reclining beneath an ancient yew, that stood at a short distance from the abbey-gate, with a folio edition of Shakespeare's plays lying open before him on the ground. He had been reading, but was now musing, on the fate of *Timon of Athens*, whose misanthropy it had been his study to imitate, when Humphrey made his appearance, and informed him that a stranger wished to see Lord Huntingdon.

"And who is he?" said the earl impetuously, springing on his feet.

"That may be well to ask, but it's more than I can tell; a smart young fellow—would not take no for an answer; a pure gentleman, I warrant. I looked him hard in the face, and scanned him from tip to toe."

"And what then?" ejaculated the lord.

"Well, well, my lord, since you will have it—there is something in his eyes and face like the old king, of blessed memory, whom I do well remember; and I would wager a Hampshire hog against a Leicester stag, that he be one of those come-by-chance young gentlemen that hang about the king's court."

"And if he be," thundered out the earl, "he shall not entrance here. Are we to be bearded by a *filius nullus?* He shall not come. Whether here in our exile at Netley, or at our home at Ashby or Donnington, a Hastings will maintain his right. I would sooner, unshriven, lay my head upon the block, as did my ancestor, at the command of the crooked-backed tyrant, than brook the insult. Again, I say, I will not see him."

"But you must, for here he is," muttered Humphrey; and James Fitzjames stood before them.

"Sir," said the earl, with a harsh voice and glaring eyes, "whoever you may be, what is your business? whose envoy are you—but first your name?"

"James Fitzjames, my lord, is the name I bear," was the modest reply of the youth.

The earl was taken by surprise, stepped back, fixed his eyes on the other for some time, and then said, in a somewhat milder tone, "the son of the Duke of York?"

"To his royal highness I am indebted for all a father's love and care."

"Well said, young sir, for it is not every *filius nullus* that so speaks of his reputed father; but he deserves it, and your candour speaks well of your heart. I swore even now that I would have no intrusion, so, young gentleman, briefly let me know your business."

"My lord, in a business which it will take some time to explain, I have ventured to intrude where I have no right, to seek the advice and assistance of my father's stauncheſt friend; but, at your lordship's bidding, will depart." Fitzjames paused.

The earl directed his eyes to the ground, but his face told of an internal struggle, and at length he spoke—

"Your modesty, my young friend, compels me to give you welcome. I will hear what you have to tell, and then advise thereon. But let us leave it for the present, and tell me how fare's the noble duke?"

"Yesterday, his highness was in his accustomed health, and in company with his majesty, was admitted a member of the corporation of Winchester."

"Ha, ha, ha! when will such fool's-play cease?" said the earl; "This is only second to the mock humility of the Pope, in washing the feet of beggars, and calling himself the servant of servants, when he rides the highest horse in Christendom. But I forget myself in speaking thus to one whe wears the Roman livery—so come with me into the Abbey, and see what it can afford."

During the afternoon, Fitzjames related the whole of the circumstances of the last night's adventure, dwelling earnestly on the services which had been rendered by old Sam, but for whose assistance two lives would have been lost; and that, relying on his honesty and intelligence, he had referred him to a gentleman in Winchester, who would remove and take charge of the wounded man, with a promise that the whole should be kept secret for the present; and that for the purpose of sheltering Cornbury and his companions from evil consequences, and yet still to keep them in suspense, he had come to Netley, but not before he had removed the boat to a place where it was not likely to be found. The earl listened attentively to the narration, and warmly, at its conclusion, commended the conduct of his young friend; but as to the attempt to shelter, from the penalty of the law, Lord Cornbury and his companions, it was not worth the trouble. In those

degenerate and jury-packing days, they would never be convicted; and, even if they were, what then? his majesty's displeasure for three days, and the whole business would be a standing joke at court for seven long years.

In the further conversation which ensued, Fitzjames expressed his desire to separate himself from the frivolities of the court, and enter into the foreign service, so that with his sword he might carve a fortune for himself—an idea which the earl applauded, and promised to assist him in carrying out. The conversation next turned on general subjects, and numerous were the inquiries made by the earl, who, for the first time in five years, exhibited a yearning for a busy life, and a wish that the years of his exile were completed.

A walk to the water's edge, a distance of a few hundred yards, was proposed by the earl, and accepted by his guest; but they had hardly passed the gateway, when they saw, passing over the bridge which spanned the moat, half-way between the abbey and the shore, a procession of three persons coming as it were to the abbey.

The party consisted of those, whom, in our last chapter, we accompanied across the Southampton estuary; namely, our old friend Foreright, Hugh Sampson the mayor, and Parson Farr. The first, who had been prevailed upon to enact the part of sergeant-at-mace, carried on his shoulder the silver oar; then followed the mayor with stately step, wearing his gold chain, which he took care to display to the best advantage; and lastly, the parson, in turns rubbing his hands and stroking his rubicund nose, and apparently enjoying the sport; whilst at some distance there were some fishermen looking on with amazement.

Presently Humphrey made his appearance, holloaing at the top of his voice, "You need not come here to hunt for Papists—we do not harbour any such cattle;" but, without noticing the salutation, they approached the abbey, and at its gateway were met by the earl, who, raising his hat from his head, inquired the purpose of the visit.

"My lord of Huntingdon, I believe," spoke the mayor, and the other nodded assent. "I am, my lord, Hugh Sampson, blacksmith by trade, but Mayor of the Town and County of the Town of Southampton; and by our ancient charters, Lord High Admiral of the southern coast, from Southsea Castle on the east, to Hurst Castle on the west, as our silver oar doth show."

"Mr. Mayor," said the earl, again raising his hat and bowing, "I recognise your authority, but may I at the same time enquire your pleasure."

"Why, in that matter, my lord, I am but a sorry spokesman, for the honest, hard-working burgesses of Hampton having made choice of a plain chap with no book learning, who came into their town without a penny in his pocket, and who owes all he has to honest industry, as their mayor, he, in return, is ready to do that which is right, no matter whom it may please, or whom it may affront."

"I have no inclination to question your independence and honesty of purpose."

"And I will take good care you shall never have grounds for it. Hugh Sampson is no truckler, or he would never have been mayor of Hampton. But come, my lord, let us to business; this good man," pointing to Foreright, "who now acts as my sergeant, is an alderman of tumble-down old Winchester."

"Humph," growled the old man, throwing the silver oar on the ground with considerable violence, "I can't stand this."

"No offence meant, old friend," said the mayor, "I came here to serve you."

"Aye, so you did—and say what you like against Jack Foreright, but naught against old Winchester."

"And I won't again, I promise, old boy—'twas but a slip of the tongue, so forget and forgive."

"And I do," said the alderman, picking up the oar, "for if the Forerights be hot-headed, and its a family complaint, they don't bear malice."

The earl and Fitzjames stared with astonishment, whilst the parson, with his back leaning on the abbey wall, was pressing his sides with his hands and laughing immoderately, and then exclaimed—'*Indulgentium, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum vestrorum*,' as they say at Rome."

"Ha, what have we here," said the earl, "a Jesuit in disguise, or one of the jolly monks we read of, tired with his long rest in the chapel vault, come out to lay claim to the abbey."

"No, no," said Farr, laughing," I am real flesh and blood, and with little affection for a cowl, or any kind of monkery; though I could do justice to a venison pasty, or a flagon of wine. I resemble the good city of Milan."

"In what?" enquired the nobleman.

"In being half-way between Geneva and Rome; having the honour to be the rector of yon church with a lofty spire; and which takes its name from the leader of the angelic host, as Milton writes; and, may I add, the chaplain to his worship."

"Not so much of a spiritual adviser," thought the earl, who then added, "After this digression, gentlemen, let us proceed to business."

The mayor then briefly stated, as far as related to himself and the parson, the object of the visit, with which our readers are already acquainted.

"And pray, sir," said the earl, turning to Forcright, "who may be the person you seek, and in whose safety you are so warmly interested?"

"Why, my lord, it is Maurice Kalendar, whitesmith of Silver Hill, and one of our city constables, who has not been seen or heard of since yesterday evening. I fear that he has been spirited away; yet, old as I am, I would travel to Jericho in search of him."

The earl directed his eyes to Fitzjames, who appeared spell-bound, and then proceeded, "Do you suspect any person of the crime of which you spoke, or has your friend made himself enemies by his words or deeds?"

"A more peaceful boy than Maurice there is not in the whole city, and Southampton and the county to boot. To be sure there was a little rumpling yesterday. Mind ye, I did not see it; but I warrant that he was in the right. A word of a sort with one of those Frenchified fellows that hang about our good King Charles, and get his majesty a bad name—a set of horse-leeches. A tiff and a turn, but he showed that he was more than a match for the lord. I got some tidings of him, both on the road and at Hampton, as his worship and his reverence can bear witness; and we learned that he sailed four hours ago for this place."

"My honest friend," said the earl, "you are upon the wrong scent. The person who sailed from Southampton and landed upon our coast, is the gentleman who now stands beside me. Is he the object of your search?"

"No—not a bit of it. Not more like Maurice than your old abbey is like our fine old Trinity. And yet I do seem, somehow, to know the gentleman."

"Is he," enquired the earl, with a smile, "one of those Frenchified fellows that haunt the court—horse-leeches, I think, you call them."

"I never said he was one of them. He hasn't enough frizzles and curls for that; but I could take a Bible oath I have seen him in their company, and as his reverence would tell us, 'Evil communications'—"

"'Corrupt good manners,'" added the parson.

The earl, laying hold of Fitzjames, drew off aside, and spoke to him in private; and then returning to his former place, said aloud, "Gentlemen, although to-day you have been mistaken, good will come of it; nay, all that you seek. Your kindness has not been thrown away. There is a mystery in this business which I could in part reveal but, for the present, we must allow it to remain in the dark. For your kindness and consideration, myself and friend are as much indebted as is the worthy alderman, with whom we must confer in private. So, gentlemen, go and see what the old abbey affords, and I am sorry for your sake that neither the pantry or the cellar are so well stored as in the olden time."

"My lord, I thank you," said the parson, "for myself and friend; I being, when occasion serves, not only his chaplain but his spokesman."

"I can speak for myself, man, if I don't know your Oxford lingo; and what have you got by it? you are as poor now, as you were thirty years ago, whilst I have in that time, turned every penny into a pound; but then you have not got such horny hands, or had so many wet shirts, as I have."

The parson turned a deaf ear and went on—"A draught out of the tankard of the Hastings, with its buffalo head and motto '*in veritate victoria*' would be acceptable after our late voyage; and, having drank to the health of the most noble Earl of Huntingdon, Baron Hastings, Huntingford, Newmarch, Botreux, Nolens, and Noels, I would, with your lordship's permission, give his worship a turn in the tennis-court, where I have had many a bout. He, Hampshire born and bred, knows nought but rustic sports; I would give him an insight into those which would better befit his high station as the representative of his sacred majesty."

"And show your own skill and knowledge of the game," said the earl with a smile.

"Which I picked up at Oxford," added the parson,

"'Ere civil dudgeon first grew high,
And men fell out, they knew not why'"

CHAPTER X.

FIFTEEN YEARS BEFORE.

"Fly with thine infamy to some dark cell,
Where on the confines of eternal night,
Mourning misfortunes, cares, and anguish dwell."

MASSINGER.

THE earl having conducted the mayor and the parson to the ancient chapel—then a tennis-court, furnished them with implements for their sport, and ordered Humphrey to attend upon them, and supply their requirements, adjourned with Foreright and Fitzjames to his own, formerly, the abbot's parlour. This was a spacious apartment lighted by an oriel window overlooking the spacious convent garden, but in other respects it had been modernized, except that it still retained the handsome and richly sculptured chimney-piece erected only a few years anterior to the suppression of the monastic establishment; over it hung, in a gilded frame deeply edged with black, one of those well-known paintings by Vandyke of "the Royal Martyr," with his grave countenance and pointed beard.

Immediately upon his entering the room Foreright made his way to the portrait, bowed to it with profound respect, and for some minutes stood gazing on the melancholy features of the monarch with his hands clasped together on his breast; and then with his right hand hastily brushed the falling tear from his cheek.

"I rejoice, old friend," said the earl, "to witness such ardent loyalty, and guess that you personally recognize his late majesty."

"You say truly, my lord," replied the other, "I did know him, for I saw him once, and kissed his royal hand. Aye—I remember me, it was on Martinmas-day, in the year 'forty-eight, when he was brought through our city a prisoner from Hurst Castle, to undergo his mock trial, by that kill-bull Harrison;" and then stamping his foot to give more force to his words, "that butcher's boy who led him like a lamb to the slaughter;" and then suddenly checking himself, "well, well, if Martinmas-day 'forty-eight was a sad one, the martyr's son made us all rejoice on Baptist-day 'eighty-two; so God save and long live our citizen king!"

"Amen," rejoined the earl; "and now, my honest friend, to business, and in the matter thereof, let me tell you, that the young citizen in whom you feel so deep an interest was yester evening, for some supposed affront, most cowardly set upon, and grievously wounded, by some of those youthful bloods, ruffians I should call them, whom our too easy king allows to follow in his train and disgrace his court; but he was timely rescued by this gentleman and another. Your friend is now in safe hands, secure from a repetition of an attack, and tended by one well-versed in surgery; whilst his assailants are known, and if they be not duly punished, it shall be no fault of mine. So console yourself, and return to Winchester, and inform his friends that the lad is out of harm's way, is well nursed, and will be among them before many days."

"Your word, my lord," said Foreright, "to me is warranty enough, but I cannot promise for others, especially his blind and bed-ridden mother; and all I can say is, on the word of what I think, a worthy lord—but the lords of these latter days are not the noble-spirited fellows of forty years agone. We have heard of their doings in London, and seen something of them in our city. For myself, I do not pry into the when and where of this outrage, and am satisfied in the boy's safety; but what am I to tell his mother? if I could say from my knowledge that all was right, it might do, but not on the word of a third party. No, no, my lord, a second-hand secret gains little credit!"

"You are right, old friend," answered Hastings, "and you shall hear all that can be told, and further, you shall bear a letter to the gentleman who has the charge of your *protegé*;" and, then, related the whole particulars as furnished to himself by Fitzjames, with which Foreright expressed himself satisfied, and intimated his anxiety to return to Winchester as soon as the earl had penned the letter.

"And in the meantime," said the other, "you shall refresh yourself with what our poor house affords," and then led the way through a winding passage into the kitchen, formerly the chapter-house, of the abbey.

It was an octagon building forty-eight feet in diameter, and thirty-six feet in height, with a richly-groined roof, seemingly supported by a single small pillar, with clustered shafts, as may be seen in the chapter-houses of the cathedrals of Salisbury and Wells. It was originally lighted by eight large

and lofty windows, inserted in the several sides of the octagon; but half of them had now been bricked up, and against one of the sides an enormous fireplace had been inserted, which was in full use when the Seymours held the abbey, one of whom here entertained Queen Elizabeth and her court. Beneath the windows, there were a series of mediæval paintings on the wall, almost obliterated by successive coats of whitewash, illustrating the reputed miracles wrought through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, who, conjointly with St. Edward the Confessor, were the patron saints of the abbey; and the like of which is still to be seen in the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral. The floor was formerly of encaustic tiles of divers patterns, but which had been repaired indiscriminately with brick or stone.

"Hist! Goody Colepepper," said the earl, addressing an apparently aged female with silvery locks: "tend you on this worthy gentleman, and place before him the best our larder and cellar affords;" and then turning to Foreright, "farewell for the present; and I hope you have a good appetite."

"Never fear, never fear," replied the other, as the lord left the room. "Fish, flesh, or fowl is all the same to me. My breakfast was but scant; and now, after my long fast, jogging on the road, and sailing on the sea, I am downright a-hungered; and feel as if I could eat the half of a dead donkey."

The worthy alderman probably spoke as he felt, but he spoke at random, for what he considered provocatives were in reality hindrances to his feasting; for when the remains of a huge pasty, containing wild-fowl shot by the earl and Humphrey in the vicinity of the abbey, had been placed before him, of which he helped himself liberally, he had not taken more than three mouthfuls, when he was off his appetite, and threw down his knife and fork exclaiming—

"What ails me? I can eat no more—I am dead beat!"

"Not so fast, alderman Foreright; you are worth a score of dead men," spoke the female who had been waiting upon him, but who had seated herself on the opposite side of the table immediately in front of him

Foreright was lost in astonishment, and gazed on her. Apparently she was as old as himself; her hair was the colour of undrifted snow; her countenance was haggard, and there was a wild expression in her eyes.

"You speak, as if you knew me!"

"And so I do, though I have not seen you for many a sad

year. I, like yourself, am Winchester bred and born; and I remember you from when I was a child no higher than this table; and many a time have you patted me on the head, and given me an apple, or a pear."

"Why, woman, by your looks, we should have been playmates; your white hair is quite a match for my bald pate; and I should think that when I die of old age, you should pretty often read the seven Penitential Psalms."

"That I often do, alderman, though my years number not much more than half of yours; but sorrow tells its tale as well as age."

"But your name?"

"That I cannot tell you, until you have answered some questions I would put to you. You remember the Plague in our city?"

The old man started up, as if stung by a serpent, his whole frame trembled, and tears rolled down his aged cheek, at the mention of that dire calamity.

"Pardon me, alderman, if I give you pain; I would I could avoid it in speaking of a time bitter enough to you, and worse to me; but on what I seek to know, a great deal hangs. Oh! did you know, you would not refuse me—indeed you would not, alderman."

Foreright again seated himself, placed his arm on the table, and calmly said, "If, as you tell me, that it is of great moment that I should answer your questions, I will do so: and that truly, though to me it may be painful—aye heartrending."

"But that good should come of it, and that justice should be enabled to overtake villany I would not ask," answered the woman; "and when you have answered my questions I will give you good reasons why I troubled you."

"Be it so—I am ready," said the old man composedly.

"Well, alderman, in May, 'sixty-seven, the dreadful Plague found its way to Winchester; and your family were along the first which it swept away."

"You speak truly," replied Foreright, "for my wife, my oldest son, and youngest daughter died on the same day; and all my other children were stricken—and I—and I alone, by mercy from above, escaped."

"I know it! and now to the question which I dread to ask. You remember the frightful storm of the night when, in your workshop, you were making the coffins for your poor dead wife and children."

"Well do I remember it! never—never to be forgotten! but why ask you the question? it sets my brain on fire!"

"It is necessary for what I want to know—you worked till a late hour—your candle was burning when the cathedral clock went eleven."

"You are right! I heard the quarter-jack, and counted the eleven strokes. But how knew you of it?—it was a night horror, of which my tongue can hardly speak—but what more do you seek?"

"What you heard and saw during the night. It will be more pain for me to hear, than you to tell; but I am prepared—tell me, I pray you—all—all—leave nothing untold," she said, throwing her head upon the table, and covering her face with her hands.

"If my words can relieve you, my good woman, they shall. As I said before, the dreadful pestilence had taken from me my wife and two children; nay more, the whole of my household were stricken and rendered powerless: and my workmen and apprentices had fled from me, afraid of the contagion, and none other were to be got in the city. By the regulations of the corporation, the dead were to buried within twenty-four hours; and how could I, an alderman, refuse obedience? What was to be done, that my loved wife and children should be decently interred, since assistance could not be had—why for my own self to do what was wanted. You may remember, I am a carpenter by trade; but, at that time, I did little at the bench, seldom used the saw, and had not handled the jack-plane for nearly twenty years, and then I was near threescore, and sick at heart; however, by God's blessing, I resolved to do my duty, and make the coffins, which would take me the whole of the night. Soon after sunset came on that terrible storm, the like of which I never witnessed;—first wind and hail, and then thunder and lightning, so loud and long, and so bright and often, as made me think that the last day was at hand, and Heaven was pouring its vengeance on our poor devoted city. Colebrook Church was uproofed, and its walls thrown down; two large elms in the Close, and three in the Churchyard, were uprooted; and one struck by a thunderbolt and rended from top to bottom.—Oh! it was an awful night, and the cold chills ran over me; but still I worked as best I could, and more than once went on my bended knees to pray for help and comfort from above. Still the storm continued for hours, and I was almost exhausted; at

length there came a calm, and I thought the thunder and lightning were agone, and I set to work more cheerfully, when I heard the clock strike eleven."

"And you, in listening, held up your hammer in your right hand?" said the woman eagerly.

The old man paused, and then vehemently exclaimed: "You are right; I remember it well, I was about to drive the last nail into my poor boy's coffin."

The woman put her hands together, as if in prayer, and then in a pitiful voice said, "Good sir, go on, and tell me all!"

"Well it was not much time after this I heard parties pass by my shop, talking in whispers; but I did not see them, or know who they were; and about half an hour afterwards, I was startled by a tremendous noise, which shook the place; and I thought that some house had fallen down, which was followed by a most dreadful shriek, which seemed to come from the house of my neighbour, old Delpot the miser. I took up my candle, and was making my way to the door, when I was almost blinded and thrown down by a flash of lightning, followed by such a peal of thunder, as if a thousand cannons were at work. I laid for some time unable to rise, and when at length I got on my feet, it was so dark, for the rain came down in torrents, that I could not see my hand before me; and so bewildered that I could not find the door, whilst my legs gave way under me, and I again sunk to the floor, where I lay powerless in body, but in agonies in mind, till daylight."

"I do, indeed, feel pity for you; and well remember that fearful night—and even more dreadful to me than to you—But the morning—the morning, alderman," she asked anxiously, "what! what did it reveal?"

"I had not been home and laid me down a few hours, when I was called upon to go to the house of my neighbour Delpot, who had been found dead in his bed, and the woman who waited upon him, lying over him, raving mad."

The woman groaned, but said nothing.

"I was too ill to go, and what I know further is upon hearsay."

"Was there no inquest?"

"I believe not—people were too frightened at the time to make inquiry into the cause of death; so they set it down as the Plague."

"The will—was there a will found?"

Foreright raised his eyes with astonishment, and answered,

"There was one found in the huge iron-bound chest, which he kept in his chamber and which I believe he stole from St. Cross Hospital, of which he was the steward, under those king-killing monsters Lisle and Cooke. The will was shown to me, and I could not say that the name of old Delpot was not in his own hand-writing; I examined it closely and could not think otherwise, and if I could, I would say the will was a forgery."

"For why?"

"The miserable old wretch who had not a spark of charity in his body, and who got all his money by being the tool of the enemies of our king and church, had many poor relatives, whom he would never relieve or succour, and many a sharp answer I had in their behalf;—'Neighbour Foreright,' he would say, 'let them make money as I have; what I have I 'll keep; but this I promise you, that when I die, three-fourths I have shall be theirs, for one quarter is ten times as much as that graceless scamp, my bastard, deserves, and as much as he shall have;—and that point is settled in black and white, and he knows it.' And if I was truly told, Parson Vicks, one of the Minor Canons—the first person in our city who died of the Plague—was a witness, and was to be executor. But what said the will which was shown but this, that the old wretch—whose mouth was always full of puritanical cant, as his heart was of wickedness—bequeathed the whole of his estate, real and personal, consisting of full forescore houses and premises in the city and suburbs, and hundreds of acres in the county, besides mortgages, bonds, and money, to his natural and beloved son (why he hated the fellow as bad as the Devil does holy water, and never gave him a farthing but under compulsion), Captain Marmaduke Mitchell, *alias* Delpot; except, I think, one hundred pounds to his trusted servant and clerk, Francis Tyrrell, whom with the said son were to be his executors."

"The mist is cleared away; and that which I long mistook for a dream now proves to be reality. The will was a forgery; and you shall know all that I can tell you, alderman. I am now a sane woman, though I have been taken for the last fifteen years for a crazed one; but tell me, was there anything said or done about the will?"

"Humph—yes—there was a demur; but then the terrors of the Plague gave no one the chance of testing it; every one thought of his own, and nought besides—and this Frank

Tyrrell, old Delpot's handy man in all his villany, made oath that he drew up the will under the directions of his master, and that he witnessed his signature."

"Heaven's thunderbolt crush the hell-hound," ejaculated the woman; "'tis false! 'tis false!"

"Patience, my friend," said Foreright mildly, "or, I shall also think you are crazed."

"Heaven forgive me and you too, alderman! oh, there is a burning sorrow; but tell me, did this unnatural son have the property, and what good did it do him?"

"None—none—none. Marry, he had the property, but within six months, it was all gone into other hands—lost over the gaming table, or, as I think, sold to a usurer of Wapping. He was overtaken by disease, and died on the public highway. As to Tyrrell—"

"Stop, I know more of him than you. You have told your tale and now I will tell mine. I am the daughter of Robert Allen, that lived under the Kingsgate."

"Aye, I knew him, and a honest fellow he was; and I remember when he lived and kept his pigs in St. Swithin's church; but he was told to do it by the then ruling powers, the Puritans, and I forgive him."

"About eighteen years ago I married Jonas Colepepper; he was one of the trencher-scrapers of the College."

The alderman nodded and muttered, "I knew him."

"But within a twelvemonth he died; and I went to live with old Master Delpot, who was then ailing; truly, you say he was a great miser, and begrudged himself the necessaries of life. Frank Tyrrell was his clerk, and used to collect his rents; Frank was a pleasing fellow when he liked, and I was fool enough to listen to him; fool, fool, that I was, to consent to a secret marriage, as by it I became his slave. The old man gradually got worse and worse, and, at length took his bed, and became more contrary, stingy, and provoking than ever."

"And I know no one ever went to see him."

"Yes—he had sometimes more company than he wanted, for Nance Mitchell's boy, Captain Delpot, as he called himself, would make his appearance; and then there was a regular quarrel between them; but the young one, by threatening to expose the old one, could always extort money from him. A short time before the old man's death, I partly overheard a conversation between Tyrrell and the Captain; it was about the old man's will; and I heard Tyrrell say, 'that can be

managed, and he could imitate any man's signature and not be found out. Well, the old man got worse and worse, and would not have a doctor, because of the expense; and what medicine he had, Tyrrell or myself would get from an apothecary. On the day of the dreadful storm he was worse than ever, but still he would have no doctor: and he told Tyrrell to go and get him something which would make him sleep. Well, night came, and I saw you at work in your shop; and Tyrrell brought a bottle of stuff, a portion of which I was to give to the old man in his pottage; and he advised me to take some, saying it would cause me to sleep—and, as you said, up till near eleven o'clock, the storm was fierce, and the lightning so flashed into the room, and the wind and thunder so shook the chimneys as made the old man very restless; and it was as much as I could do to keep him quiet. At length the wind sunk, and the thunder and lightning gave over, and I left the bedside, and went into the passage, where there was a window overlooking the shop, where you were at work making the coffins. I could distinctly see you; you were in your shirt sleeves, and you had something wrapped round your head."

"That's right. My daughter Sue, that died five days afterwards, took her little cloak, and wrapped it round my head, and pinned it, so that I should not be cold, before I left the house—it was a red one."

"I cannot say the colour. I stood looking out some time when the clock struck, and I saw you stand listening with your hammer in your hand, as the clock went the hour—aye, on my Bible oath, I could swear to it. After that, I went back to the old man, and found him quiet, and somewhat dozy. I then warmed his posset at the hot embers, and gave it him; he swallowed a part, and wished me good-night. I then drank the remainder of the posset, and went to my own bed in the next room, parted from the old man's room by a wooden partition. Before I could undress myself, I felt so drowsy, I laid myself on the bed, and, as I think, went to sleep. All I have told you, alderman, is as clear to my mind as the sun to my eye at noonday; but what follows has yet been as a kind of dream; but now I think I can see through it! Well, how long I laid I cannot tell; but I was disturbed by hearing parties come up the stairs, and go into the old man's room. I started up, and followed them as far as the door, and saw that they were Captain Delpot and my hus-

band—no, I won't own him—the villain Tyrrell. They had a dark lanthorn, and I saw them go to the iron-bound chest, and, to open it, they had to pull out an iron bar; and, in doing it, they awoke the old man, who started in a sort of frenzy: during which I saw Tyrrell put a packet into the chest, and take up another, which he thrust into his vest; and then make for the bed, pushed the old man down upon his pillow, and cover him with the bed-clothes. Immediately I rushed in to his assistance, pushed the ruffian on one side, when the lid of the chest fell with a tremendous noise, which still rings in my ears, and I became insensible."

"And you were found the next morning lying on the bed across the dead man," said the alderman, wiping his eyes.

"That may be, but it is not in my memory—but I do remember that my brain seemed too big for my head, and he who had promised at the altar to love, cherish, and protect me, was my greatest foe; said that I was mad, and had been crazed for years. I had no friends, and I was sent to the Bridewell, as one out of her mind. I wished to tell my story; but they would not hear me, because I could not say it was not a dream. Months and months was I kept in prison, in a cell by myself; no one to visit me—no bed—no anything; and no food better than bread and water. Oh, what I suffered! Heaven only knows—my poor brain—my poor brain was all of a blaze; and often, very often, did I pray death to come—and it seemed that to all, but to me, he would come; often when the dead-cart rolled along the street I heard, in my cell, the driver, with a hoarse voice, cry, 'Bring out your dead!' I did even envy the poor corpses, and when one keeper after another brought my allotted food, I was sure that the Plague had been among them. How many months I was in Bridewell I cannot tell, but when I was let out, I found that Tyrrell was gone, no one knew whither; and that nearly all my friends and relatives had died of the Plague; and, even then, I could not tell whether I saw or dreamed the deeds of that horrid night: so I was counted as one who had lost her reason. I left Winchester, and wandered about the country, living by charity, till by chance I solicited alms of my lord, at the abbey-gate, who kindly brought me in, relieved the pangs of hunger, and having heard my story, took me into his service, and here I have been for five years."

During the narration, the old man had thrown his head upon the table, covering his face with his hands; but, at its

conclusion, started up, and exclaimed, "The daughter of honest Bob Allen shall be righted yet! fret no more, my good woman; you have got back your reason, and no one can doubt you saw with your open eyes that which you long thought to be a dream. You shall find a friend in me, not only for your own sorrows, but in justice to the poor persons whom I now know to have been defrauded of their own. What of Tyrrell? is that scoundrel still in the land of the living?"

"He was, nine months ago, when I saw him at Botley fair. He was there under the name of Doctor Morresco, and had a standing for the sale of nostrums, as certain cures for agues, fevers, tooth-aches, and everything else! I had a tooth-ache, and not knowing him, he having on a peruque, went to his standing and, in serving me, he let me see his left hand and I knew it; there were the marks of the fork which pierced and pinned it and the ace of clubs he was trying to conceal, to the table, and thus cheat when playing at cards. My temper got the better of me, and I cried out, 'Not Doctor Morresco, but Tyrrell the murderer!' he turned pale for the moment, then put his hand into his vest, and took out what I believe to be the stolen will, and said with a grin: 'Do you see it?' and then cried out, 'My good people, take care of your pockets; here is a mad woman, and a witch!' upon which the boys began to hustle me, and I feared would have drowned me; but old Humphrey was near at hand, and got me safe home; from Humphrey I have heard that he had often seen him before, and once helped to kick him out of my lord's house in Leicestershire; and that he is well known as a pimp and a pander, and suspected of being a cut-purse."

"We'll have him yet; and the will too," said the alderman; "but I can't as yet see my way. If he haunts the company of lords and gallants to sponge upon them, he will make his way to Winchester, and there I have a trusty ferret that shall fix him. But we must bide our time—there is no doubt of his guilt; but, as yet, we want legal proof. Let me, my good woman, get the matter I have come here for to-day off my hands, and I am at your service."

CHAPTER XI.

HAMPSHIRE RUSTICS.

"'Midst gloomy glades, in warbles clear,
Wild Nature's sweetest notes they hear;
On green untrodden banks they view
The hyacinth's neglected hue;
In their lone haunts and woodland rounds
They spy the squirrel's airy bounds;
And startle from her ashen spray,
Across the glen, the screaming jay."

TOM WARTON.

THE "curfew's measured roar from the distant town," had been heard, and the sun was about to sink below the horizon, ere the earl had gathered together his guests. Fitzjames appeared thoughtful, the parson was hilarious, and his eyes twinkled as if through a watery atmosphere; the mayor was puffing, as if the exercise he had taken was too much for his breath, whilst the alderman was unmistakeably dejected. To the latter his lordship had given two packets, one to be delivered to his highness the Duke of York, and the other to Master Roger Coram; and now, attended by Fitzjames, who was to remain with him, he accompanied the others to the beach, saw them embark, and make their way towards the opposite coast.

The mayor with soothing words, and the parson with well intended banter, sought to cheer up the old man, but all in vain; and even after landing at Southampton, they hardly could get a word from him, and upon reaching his worship's house, Foreright respectfully yet positively refused to go in: alleging that, late as it was, pressing business called him to Winchester that night.

It was not until he had parted from his friends, that the old man found that the labours and excitement of a long day had been too much for his age and strength, and it was with great difficulty that he reached the "Cowherds," where he had put up his horse, and was obliged to rest himself several times against the lofty elms which stood on either side of the road.

At length he got there, and informed the landlord that his business detained him longer than he expected, and that he

was so exhausted that he could go no farther, and wished to take up his quarters there for the night, which the host told him he could do, and promised to see his steed properly racked up and cared for, which pleased the old man; who, having taken of a cup of mulled wine, retired to rest.

His anxiety for the safety of his young friend had considerably subsided, but the recollection of what he had heard at the abbey, so haunted his mind as to keep him awake several hours; at length he fell into a sound sleep, which lasted till full two hours after his usual time of rising. When he got up, he was himself again, and sat down to his breakfast with his customary appetite; and having paid the score, mounted his steed to return home.

He had reached Marlbrook Pond, when it crossed his mind that he had a cousin a few years older than himself living at Stoneham whom he had not seen for many years, and that if he neglected the present opportunity, he should probably never see again, and as he had now the day before him, he determined to pay her a visit. He soon reached the turning on the right hand, and directed his horse down "the dark and mirry lane," till it expanded into open green; in the centre of which stood the decayed trunk of a gigantic crab-tree (which was in its prime when the Abbot of Hyde was the lord of Stoneham, as is shown in Domesday), and which gave its name to the adjoining farm, the destination of our traveller.

Crab-tree Green Farm consisted of a dwelling house, which, if it is yet standing, has been converted into labourers' cottages, but then thought a sufficient residence for a substantial yeoman, with barn, stable, sheds, orchard, and about seventy acres of land. The structure of the house was of a framework of timber, with the interstices filled with brick. It consisted of two stories, one being the living apartments of the family, and the other the sleeping apartments, which were lighted with dormant windows in the thatch with which the house was covered. The adjoining barn, stable, and sheds, were of wood, and also covered with thatch—these were on the left hand side of the house; and on the right hand side, there was an orchard containing numerous merry, plum, apple, and pear trees; and in the front there was a yard, in which was deposited the refuse of the barn and stable, and over which ranged at pleasure hogs of divers ages and sizes.

Foreright having got opposite the house, rode boldly into the yard, and hailing a young female whom he saw tending a

brood of chicken in the orchard, enquired if Farmer Durman was at home; but the girl, instead of answering him, cried out with a loud voice, as sound as a bell, and which a huntsman might envy—

"Feyther, here be a gentleman that wants you!"

And forthwith there issued from the barn a man with a flail in his hand, and who stalked over the soft bedding of the yard towards the horseman.

"Surely—surely, it must be Alderman Foreright; old friend, I be mortal glad to see you, so get off and come in doors, and have something to eat and drink."

The alderman dismounted, and heartily shook hands with the honest farmer who went on as he led the way to his house—

"Who would have thought it? I as much expected to see the Man in the Moon, or the Witch of Endor; but you are welcome, and I am desperately glad to see you;" and then, turning to the girl in the orchard, "I say Molly, never mind your chicky-biddies, but go and tell your granny that her cousin Foreright be come to see her;" and then catching sight of a lad who was entering the yard with a leathern bottle in his hand, "Dick, lead that pony into the stable, take off her bridle and saddle, rub her down, and give her a good feed of corn."

The friends now entered the house, the front door opening into the kitchen—a spacious but low room paved with brick. The fire was on the hearth, within a spacious chimney, and having seats on both sides of it. Over it there was a large iron pot suspended, and which was kept boiling by the fire being from time to time supplied with moors (the dried roots of trees). On one side of the room ran a long table, at which a score of grown people could be seated, and where the farmer, his family, and his servants partook of their meals in common, in true patriarchal style. Another side of the room there were some shelves not garnished, as was the fashion a century ago, with rows of bright shining pewter plates, but with well-cleaned wooden trenchers; and, in another place, was hung sundry flitches of well-dried bacon.

"Becky, my love," said the farmer, speaking to a neatly-dressed and comely damsel, who was standing at the table making dumplings, "this gentleman is my old friend, Alderman Foreright, of Winchester, and your grandmother's first cousin, whom she thinks so much of, and loves to talk about so often."

The young woman stayed on her work, rubbed her right

hand in her apron, and extended it towards the alderman, who gently grasped it, exclaiming:

"Lips! as well as hands, girl:" kissed her cheek, and then added, "God bless ye, my child; and good luck be thine through life!"

"And if she goes on as she has began, she will well deserve it," said the farmer gravely; and then added, laughingly—"and I do promise that Jack Lavington, of Horton Farm, a sound thrashing, if he comes sneaking about these premises to steal her away before I am ready to let her go."

Rebecca blushed, whilst the alderman smiled, and then inquired of the farmer the number of his family.

"There be seven of them, besides my good mother, whom we shall find in the orchard, busy as she always is with her spinning—four girls and three boys. You know I lost my poor wife eight years ago come the fall; and of the children there is, first, your old favourite Dorothy, who is married to Will Cowper, the squire's head woodman, and not a bad match I take it to be: then there be Becky, who minds the house and cooks; and Frank, my head carter, who has gone to the mill with Blind Sorrel with grist; and then Tom, who is in the hayfield, a handy chap at thatching or hedging, or in the barn, and who goes down to the mansion every now and then, to practise riding high-spirited horses—for the young squire, Master Edward, wants him as his groom, and go with him to court, which I hardly like, for I have heard sorry tales of how the young gentlefolks behave at Winchester, of which you best know."

The old man looked grave, and shook his head as if in sorrow.

"Then there be Nancy who milks the cows, and makes the butter and takes it to Hampton market; then Molly who waits upon her grandmother, and feeds the chicken; and then little Dick, the doll pig, who drives the cows a-field, takes care of the geese and hogs, and frights the birds from the corn. But I forgot you have nothing to eat or drink.

The alderman though he needed not refreshment, knew from experience that his friend would not be satisfied unless he both eat and drank in the house, and to save trouble said he would take pot-luck with the family.

"Nay, nay, that sha'nt be," said the other. "Dinner won't be ready this hour, and then we have only fat bacon, fat, all fat; cabbage and hard dumplings, which I take bean't fit food

for a city alderman, and an old friend that has not been at Crab-tree Farm this many-a-day. But I think what will do; so Becky, get thee the frying-pan and some new laid eggs; and I will cut some rashers out of the gammon of the eighteen-score hog, and so, alderman, you shall have some eggs and rashers, which be accounted a dainty dish; and in the mean time you shall go and see your cousin; I warrant ye, she will be glad to see you."

Leaving Rebecca to her domestic duties, the two friends went into the orchard, where, in a warm corner, seated in a canopied chair of straw-work, they found the old lady tending her spinning,

> "Whilst the wheel went whirling round,
> With all its lov'd monotony of sound."

We need not describe the warm greetings of the ancient cousins, and how much they were pleased at having met once again.

"Ah, cousin John," said the lady, "my health is wonderful considering my years; I can eat well, drink well, and sleep well, and don't know, if it wasn't for the rheumatics, I couldn't dance. But as it is, I can't get from home, not even to church, and that do grieve me; but we have all our trials, cousin John, and then you are full seven years younger than I—aye, and I remember John Foreright, the very day you were born—it was on Winchester fair day; and there was a terrible fall of snow, and there was a very hard winter that year, and the snow was to be seen on Chesfoot Head till after Easter."

"You surely," said the alderman, "can't remember that."

"I don't say exactly that I do, but I have heard the old folks talk of it; but I do remember that thou wast the unluckiest urchin in all our city, and do believe my dear uncle winked at it. If there was any mischief, Jack Foreright was sure to be in it. Who got into Wolvesey garden, and stole the bishop's best apples? who scaled the dean's ducks? and who locked the door, and ran away with the church key, whilst the clerk was tolling the curfew?"

The alderman rubbed his hands shrugged his shoulders and laughed at the enumeration of his boyish exploits, and then added,

"But pray remember, cousin, the old saying that 'the wildest colt makes the best horse.'"

"That may be, John, for since thou hast been a man I have heard nought against thee—but much for thee."

The further conversation between them naturally turned on events of their youth and would have lasted longer but for the appearance of another party, namely Mrs. Cowper, the farmer's eldest daughter, bringing in her arms her infant child, not then three months old.

Dorothy Durman was Foreright's god-daughter, and she was a frequent visitor at his house, a playmate of his younger children, and had always been his especial favourite, and delighted were the old man and the young mother to meet, and that so unexpectedly. After inquiries for her husband, he asked the name of her child, and, on being told that it was John, out of compliment to, and kind recollection of, himself, the old man almost jumped for joy.

"Ah, Dorothy, or Dorry, as my little Kitty used to call you in her play; as I nursed you when you were in long clothes, so I must nurse my namesake—I 'll take care of him; for if my arms be old, they are trustworthy."

With some hesitation the fond mother surrendered her burthen to the care of the old man, who was delighted with his charge, and who walked up and down singing, as best he could,

"Up, cavaliers, up! the Roundheads are coming!"

to the astonishment and amusement of the farmer and his family, and then finding, as he said, that he was not so young as he used to be, returned the child to its mother.

"Cousin John," said the old lady, who had been as much amused as the rest, "I do really think you will die a boy. That song I used to hear you sing or holla out forty years ago, when you and my poor husband, though firm friends, were on opposite sides during the squabble between the King and the Parliament. You were a Kingsman, and a staunch one too: but my husband was obliged to be for the Parliament, because the Flemings were then on that side, though they be now loyal folk. Oh, it was a trying time; but old Sir Thomas, knowing my husband to be a trusty fellow, sent him from place to place with messages to his brothers; once to Oxford to Master Kit (Christopher), who was killed, and died in my husband's arms; then all down into Wales, to Master Thomas; and up to London to Sir Oliver Fleming who held some high place in the Parliament House, and several times into Buckingham-

shire with messages to Master Hampden and General Cromwell, who you know were his kinsmen."

"Ah, I see it now," said the alderman, "the mischief's out; for love of kin they forgot their duty as true Englishmen. But no matter if the Flemings were once for Kirk and Parliament, they have seen the error of their ways, and are now for Church and King—so let us forget and forgive."

Further conversation was interrupted by the farmer, who informed him that the eggs and bacon were ready, and almost forced him into the house.

The alderman took his seat at the hospitable board, replenished by four times as much as he could desire,

"And now, alderman," said the farmer, "what will you take to drink? my ale, I promise you, is not so good as could be wished; either Becky was too stingy with her wormwood, or the thunder of last week has touched it, and made it summery and tart. What say you to a cup of merry wine, or shall I peg you some of our last year's mead, which I warrant is bright by this time."

The alderman replied that a horn of ale was all that he would take, and then eat what his appetite would allow him of the eggs and bacon.

The farmer pressed him again and again to reload his platter, but the other firmly declined, and having stated his anxious desire to get home as soon as possible retired to the orchard, to take leave of the ladies, and shook hands with his cousin—but tears were in both their eyes, they felt they were parting to meet no more.

The good old farmer persisted in attending his friend as far as the high road to Winchester, where they parted; and the alderman jogged gently on till he had reached the village of St. Cross, where he was met by his grand-boys, Walter and Philip Newbolt, who had been on the look-out for him all the morning. The old man was heartily glad to see them, dismounted, and placing the boys on the saddle, led the pony the remainder of the journey through the streets, till they reached the stable-yard of the Royal Oak.

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

"As round the oak the mantling ivy twines."

POPE.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL is indebted for its latest improvements, previous to the Reformation, to Prior Thomas de Silkstede, a native and lord of the manor of Silkstead, situated about three miles south of the city. The said improvements consisted in the extension and adornment of the lady-chapel, the present pulpit in the choir, and the erection of an elaborate stone screen in the south transept of the church, enclosing a space still known as Silkstede's chapel. These several works are easily distinguished, either by his initials "T. S.," or by his adopted mark—a skein of silk and a steed or horse, being a riddle upon his name.

The hamlet of Silkstead, which now consists of a single farm-house and four cottages, is situated on the sides of a lane or drove-way, about a mile in length and in a thickly-wooded country. The lane is used only for agricultural purposes, as it may be said to lead nowhere, is very seldom traversed by strangers, and is hardly known to exist beyond its own immediate locality. At the period of our tale Silkstead could boast of its manor-house, the birthplace of the prior, which was pulled down towards the close of the last century, and, although no traces of the mansion are now to be seen, there are of its park. The house and manor at that time belonged to Roger Coram, a Roman Catholic gentleman, to whom his co-religionists in Winchester are indebted for the site of their present chapel and surrounding property.

Squire Coram was now somewhat above sixty years of age, had a harsh forbidding countenance, with great decision of character and energy of purpose. He had studied the law, but, in the war between Charles I. and his Parliament, he entered the ranks of the former, and on several other occasions rendered good service; fought bravely at Naseby, where he was taken prisoner, but obtained his liberty on the payment of a heavy fine. "Burnt children," it is said, "dread the fire"—not so with Coram, whose loyalty was too earnest for him to submit to Parliamentary rule, and he so involved himself in abortive

schemes for his sovereign, that he was obliged to leave England and take refuge in France. Here he was soon disgusted with the trifling of his fellow exiles, and on one occasion was so enraged that he had recourse to his sword, and stabbed and killed a gentleman who had offended him. The matter was hushed up, and was speedily forgotten by all but himself, who, in a fit of compunction, entered a monastery with the intention of devoting the remainder of his life to the service of the church, and after a short time was admitted to minor orders, and took the vow of celibacy; but he soon found that the rule of "entire obedience," did not suit his sturdy and self-willed disposition. Upon the Restoration he returned to England, but not the less devoted to "the ancient faith," because he had declined to become one of its ministers. His purse, his house, and his personal services were ever at the command of his fellow Catholics; and when, after Titus Oates had set the kingdom in a blaze, and the people had run mad in their dread of Popery; when Catholic priests where hunted down like beasts of prey, and death was the penalty for the celebration of mass, the secluded manor-house at Silkstead was the place to which scores of them flew for refuge; and in which, by the ingenuity of its proprietor, numerous hiding-places had been devised and constructed, so that the house may be said to have resembled a rabbit-burrow.

The storm by its own violence exhausted itself, and in 1680, Charles II. triumphed over the Parliament, which he had summoned to meet at Oxford. There was a rebound in the popular feeling, and the Country, or exclusion party, were worsted, which was followed by relaxation of the penal laws. To many an ardent Catholic, "hope told a flattering tale," and the present was considered but as the commencement of happier days; the king was believed to be at heart more a Catholic than a Protestant, whilst of his brother, the Duke of York, there could be no mistake.

Master Coram, in whom was blended great shrewdness with an uncompromising zeal for his church, was not so easily satisfied: and what he most dreaded was the intemperate enthusiasm and too confident anticipation of his friends, yet he thought the time had arrived for the carrying into execution what had long been brooding in his mind, namely the establishment of a school where the Catholic youth of England might be educated free from any taint of heresy, and for that purpose, offered to give up the use of his mansion. The project having

been duly considered, was gladly acceded to, and a Benedictine monk, of the name of Travers, was appointed as the spiritual adviser and scholastic head of the establishment, whilst in other matters it was under the care of Coram. In its discipline there was much of monastic rule, and long-forgotten words were called into use, such as refectory, lavatory, dormitory, matins and others familiar to the mediæval inquirer.

One advantage which the school possessed was its secluded situation, and for it to be known as little as possible to the world was the study of its founder; who took the whole of his land into his own hands and farmed it for the benefit of his infant establishment. If Master Coram seldom went to market, and had but little corn to sell, it was because he had a large family to feed. Indeed the inmates may be said to have lived almost entirely on the produce of the land. Meat, whether mutton, pork, or beef, was killed at home; the malt was made from the barley grown on the farm, and the beer with hops which sprung up in the hedge-rows, or, if that failed, with wormwood; whilst the cows yielded a plentiful supply of milk. Tea and coffee were unknown, and sugar only made its appearance as an occasional substitute for honey in the sweetening of puddings on the days of abstinence commanded by the church. Still further, as the assistance of a tailor and shoemaker could not be dispensed with, two small rooms were fitted up as workshops, and one of each trade was engaged to come from Winchester to do the necessary repairs, and to live in the house till their work was done.

The school had been opened more than two years, yet the privacy of the place had not been invaded, and few save those of the same persuasion, knew of its existence, though the scholars were nearly forty in number; and among them were some whose names were closely connected with our English history; there was a Howard and a Talbot, an Arundel and a Stourton, a Dormer and a Throckmorton, and an Englefield and a Tichbourn.

Although nearly all the students of the house deemed the good time coming, Master Coram, with all his moral courage, was unwilling to become a martyr through neglect, and therefore, the services of a church which revels in pomp, and loves the "replication of sweet sounds," were conducted in secresy and silence. The room used as the chapel, was at the top of the house, and its approach had so many turnings, as to give ample time for the officiating priest to make his escape, through

a hidden passage made for the purpose. The only permanent furniture of the place, consisted of a large table, used as the altar, on which stood a crucifix and a couple of candlesticks, and a few plain benches; whilst the chalice, and other articles required in the mass, as well as as the priest's vestment, were of the plainest, and, we may say, of the most flimsy and common materials.

The evening of the twenty-eighth of June was bright and pleasant. The boys had been dismissed from their studies, and had partaken their supper, in which a can of milk and a lump of bread was the portion of each lad, and they were now wandering at pleasure, in groups of twos and threes, up and down the lane in which the house was situated.

At the very extremity of their bounds, where the lane opens on Yew Hill, and where the tower and part of the roof of Winchester Cathedral are visible, there were three boys, whose eyes were directed to the sacred edifice.

"Which is the man of you two," said one of them, "that will deny that that old church won 't be ours again before five years? I wish the king would speak out, and then, in spite of the Devil and Lord Shaftesbury, it would be all right, and the work would soon be done."

"And then how the old walls would ring with our *Alma* and *Regina cæli*, which they have not heard so long; the very stones, I think, would dance with joy," said the second.

"Fancy—fancy," continued the first, "mass said there again. The héretics turned out, and we Silkstead boys being called to attend, wear white surplices, and take part in the procession."

"And my uncle's tenantry," interposed the third and youngest boy, "could be the body-guard, and keep the heretics at bay."

"Well said, Tichbourn, it shall be so; and then we will march from the Cathedral to the College, and turn out Warden, Fellows, and scholars; and let them know whether William of Wykeham was a Catholic or Protestant: and if he was a Catholic, the College belongs to us!"

"And, then," said the second, waxing warm, "we will go into all the churches, and pull down all those nasty Protestant pews, and make a bonfire of them."

"At the top of that hill," rejoined the first, pointing to one of a conical form.

"St. Catherine's," said Tichbourn; "what a capital blaze

they would make! It would be seen for a hundred miles round."

"Lower down the lane was young Howard in quiet conversation with another lad, who "bows to him with lowly reverence." The former was explaining that there were not less than four of his name and family peers of the realm; that the Duke of Norfolk his uncle was the very head of the nobility, and his influence was second only to that of the king; and that he himself had been sent to the school merely to give it a name and reputation.

Still lower down the lane were to be seen two lads of sober demeanour, and whose destination was the ministry, engaged in picking wild flowers for the adornment of the chapel on the morrow, being the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, which is a feast of the first rank in the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet still lower down the lane, and at no great distance from the house, there was a group of a dozen boys standing round an aged man, who, seated upon a stile, was making pop-guns for their use. The old man was none other than the ex-Protector, Richard Cromwell, whom, as we have before stated, passed under the name of Clarke; and who was happier in catering for the amusement of children, than he was when surrounded by all the pomp and circumstance of state at Whitehall. He was an older acquaintance of Roger Coram than he was of the townclerk of Southampton—their intimacy having commenced when they were fellow-students of the law in Lincoln's Inn. In temperament and disposition two men could hardly be more different. Coram was in earnest in everything he undertook, Cromwell was never warmed to exertion, and was willing to take things easy; the one was industrious and plodding, the other idle and frivolous; the first was bent on being a first-rate lawyer, the other preferred Shakespeare and Ben Jonson to Littleton or Coke. Yet, in spite of this incongruity, they were staunch friends; and Coram was well pleased, in his hours of relaxation, with the prattle and gossip of Cromwell. At length came the Civil War, and they parted, to be accounted on different sides; Coram having felt it his duty, as a loyal subject and true Catholic, to draw his sword in the defence of his sovereign; whilst Cromwell contented himself by assuming a more serious appearance, as the son of the favourite general of the army of saints.

After a lapse of about three years, their intimacy was

renewed. Oliver Cromwell was very desirous that his son Richard should marry the daughter and heiress of Richard Mayor, Esq. of Hursley, who possessed considerable influence in the town of Southampton, and, in conducting the negociation, he showed as much shrewdness and policy as he afterwards displayed in working his way to supreme power.

Richard was no ardent lover, and both during his courtship and after his marriage, would steal away from Hursley under pretence of business at Southampton or Winchester, but in reality to visit his friend Coram. His father-in-law and wife were staunch Puritans, himself a latitudinarian; they were republicans, he was, if anything, a royalist at heart; and he was glad to escape from long prayers, lectures, and psalmody, and to spend his evenings in the chimney-corner at Silkstead.

The intimacy between the two friends was again broken off by Coram's loyal zeal, which obliged him to become an exile, which was also the fate of the other. Upon Cromwell's return to England, he took up his residence at Cheshunt in Hertfordshire; but, hearing that his Hampshire friend was still alive, he removed to Hursley.

He had, however, but a limited interest in that estate, whilst its management was wholly in the hands of his son Oliver, with whom he was not on the most friendly terms. To wile away his time, hunting and hawking were not sufficient, hence his frequent visits to Silkstead. With the boys he was an especial favourite, and loud were the huzzas, when one of them had announced, that "old Rosey" was coming across the fields with his dogs. Whether Coram was in the way or absent, Cromwell was equally at home, and his fondness for the boys relieved Father Travers of a portion of his responsibility; and caused many a smile to beam on the usually grim visage of Coram, who would sometimes say to him, "They say once a man and twice a child, but you, friend Dick, have always been, and always will be, a child!"

This Cromwell would take in good part, and on the strength of it would beg some favour for the little ones. Sometimes he would take charge of them when they were allowed to range over one of the neighbouring downs, and would supply them with foot-balls, tops, and marbles. Sometimes he would take a party for a long walk; always equally avoiding Winchester, and Merdon Lodge. Then he was a capital hand in amusing them with tales, and, as we have stated that many of the scholars were the children of persons of distinction, he would

have his say about the quarterings of their family arms, and tell them by what right they had been assumed; and also in what way their ancestors had distinguished themselves, with discussions on battles, beheadings, and forfeitures. And for many of them he had a nick name—thus, young Howard was always, "Jockey of Norfolk!" young Talbot, the "thrice renowned Talbot;" and Throckmorton, "our trusty councillor." On one occasion the old man forgot himself and caused pain when he did not intend it, by calling young Stourton in his play, "the lord of the silken cord," in allusion to the execution of his ancestor, Lord Stourton, at Salisbury, for murder. The boy wept, when the old man ran to him, and, with faltering voice, begged his pardon for what he had said, and prayed the acceptance of a gold ring as a peace-offering. But what, to the youngsters, caused the most glee, was to get the old man to give them imitations of Hugh Peters, and other celebrated Puritan divines, which he would do, with gross and grotesque exaggeration of the matter, mode, and voice. But, of late, he had been more chary on that point, since one of the boys asked him about that antichrist of a fellow, Oliver Cromwell, who had sold himself to the devil for seven years prosperity. He winced under the question, and then turned it off as best he could, and said, "As to the man you speak of I wish to have nothing to say, for he was a relative of my wife, whose dead and gone; and though she was somewhat of a shrew, I don't want to hear anything that would give her pain, if she were alive;"—"And you never shall, Master Clarke," shouted the boys, and faithfully did they keep their promise.

The sun was now on the decline, but its beams pierced through openings in the oak and ash trees on the western side of the lane, when a rustic bounded down the lane at a rapid pace.

"Hist, Anthony," said Cromwell addressing him, "where is thy master, and when will he be home?"

"An hour ago, Master Clarke, I left him in Winchester; and before another hour I expect he will be here—but excuse me, sir, I have a message of importance for Mistress Bridget."

"Message of importance—no mischief abroad I hope," muttered the old man, as the servant made his way as fast as he could to the house.

A few minutes afterwards there sounded a shrill whistle—the well-known sound for the boys to return home to attend

prayers, and then to bed; and down the lane they trooped, each respectfully bidding their old friend good night.

Cromwell remained for some time torturing himself with what this message of importance could mean; and then, to relieve himself, sauntered up and down the lane, sometimes listening to the song of the nightingale, and then feasting his eyes on the refulgence of the glowworm. After a time he heard the step of a horse, and then parties in conversation, and in a few minutes they were close to him; and then, in spite of the faded light, he easily recognized his friend Coram, who was leading a pony on which was seated a young man apparently in a weak state of body, and followed by a strange-looking character, who lopped along muttering to himself.

When they reached the house—"You are now," said Coram, "at your journey's end, and I will assist you to dismount; and, after a light supper and a good night's rest, you will arise in the morning thrice the man you are. So drive away all fear and care, make yourself quite at home, and show us that you are an Englishman."

"Sir," replied the youth, "I know not how to thank you, for my head is so bewildered by the misty recollections of the four last days, and the thoughts of——"

"Not a word more! I have already told you that your mother is acquainted with your safety; so take my arm, and walk in-doors."

Cromwell followed them both into the house, and within a quarter of an hour his mind was relieved from the fear that the important message related to anything which would imperil his friend's establishment; and then left for his own home, accompanied by a limping bloodhound; and humming, as he crossed the fields, the burthen of a loyal song which he had picked up whilst his father was in command of the army of the Parliament. In the meantime the sick man was duly attended to, and whom the reader will easily recognize as Maurice Kalendar.

Very early in the morning, succeeding the night's adventure, we have already related, Fitzjames, who for reasons of his own, had determined upon absenting himself from the Court, dispatched old Sam, on whose fidelity he thought he could rely, to Master Coram—with whom he lodged in the city, praying him to take charge of the stranger, with other requests, which it is not necessary to enumerate. Within an hour Sam returned with a satisfactory answer, and Fitzjames

took his departure for Southampton: but not before he had shared the contents of his purse with Sam. If the former had confidence in the integrity and intelligence of his rough companion, the other had equal faith in the young courtier, and determined that his wishes should be complied with; and he was continually at the side of the sick man, or on the brink of the stream within a few yards of the hut.

Long before the sun had attained his zenith, Master Coram made his first call; and as, in his monastic noviceship, he had studied medicine, he knew how to proceed; and it is sufficient to say, that the patient was duly attended to by Coram, and watched over by Sam. Upon the abatement of the fever, and the return of reason, Kalendar stated, as far as his recollection could serve, the particulars of the affray with Lord Cornbury; but his own sufferings seemed less to oppress him than his anxiety for his mother; and to relieve him upon this point, Coram waited upon her, and assured her of his safety; and in return, received a message from her to him.

On the fourth day, Kalendar was so far recovered as to be removed to a more comfortable place, and Coram made choice of Silkstead manor-house, which would afford a change of air and scenery, and where he would be under his own eye. A quiet pony was obtained, and a little time before sunset, they set out on their journey, Kalendar riding, and Coram leading the beast, while Sam preceded them, on the look-out, to avoid encountering strangers. The distance did not exceed three miles, through green lanes, and over a spacious down, and in good time, and without interruption. they arrived at their destination.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ALDERMAN'S ENTERTAINMENT.

"Oh! blessed with temper whose unclouded ray,
Could make to-morrow happy as to-day;
Who never answers till her husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shows the rules:
Charms by her yielding, by submitting sways,
And has her object most when she obeys."

POPE.

WE now revert back to the time immediately following, when the King was admitted to the freedom of the city of Winchester, at St. John's House.

When the company separated, the newly-made knight returned in solitary grandeur to his own home, there to muse upon his dignity and importance. So wrapped-up in himself, so blown and blinded with pride, that he had neither ears to hear, or eyes to see; and the denizens of earth passed unheeded by. On leaving, he gave a few directions to the townclerk; but to no one else did he deign to say a word, or even to receive the congratulations which Buskin was prepared to offer. Home he strutted, unconscious of the presence of a single person, with expanded breast and uplifted eye; and with a step, as if the dust of the street ought to feel honoured, in being touched by the feet of a new-made knight.

Poor old Buskin took it to heart, that the man whom he had introduced to the Corporation, assisted in making alderman, and then mayor, and consequently knight, should thus early forget a friend; but the alderman had no revengeful soul, or rather had a soul so very small, that it had not room for a single particle of that angry passion; and he thereby preserved his equanimity of temper.

"I say, Buskin," spoke his wife, "I take that Ledger to be an ill-bred fellow."

"Sir Pharaoh, my dear."

"Sir Pharaoh be hanged, you silly numskull—why don't you call him King Pharaoh at once—I am sure he ought to have a civil tongue in his head, and not strut like a crow in a gutter, and take no notice of a body, as if he were more than flesh and bones—I haven't patience with the fellow!"

"Now, my dear, be not angry," breathed out the alderman

coaxingly, "no doubt he has some great business in hand: you saw his majesty speak to him. It will be all right to-morrow."

"But it won't, I tell you, Buskin; it never shall with me: you are a fool, and you will go bowing to him, as you always do, as if he had done you a favour instead of treating us as he has done; out with you for a stupid lout, the older you get the more silly you grow."

"But, dear, surely you would have me be civil."

"Not to that fellow, because he is not civil. Here are our friends, Dame Ryeland and Sally Stubbs, out of the country: I promised them they would find the mayor a kind obliging creature, and he turns out a brute."

"Hush, my dear, people will hear."

"And I don't care who hears—the fellow is as proud as Lucifer, and he will keep him company one of these days."

The alderman was uneasy, for his lady was very angry; and he was at a loss how to mollify her displeasure, when happily his niece came to his assistance.

"Aunt! Dame Ryeland and cousin Sally will come and have dinner, and stay the day, if you will promise to let them only take pot-luck, and make no fuss."

"To be sure, girl, I will; and so you may tell them," and off skipped Alice, followed sedately by her aunt.

Mistress Buskin was very free to promise that her friends would find all things plain and homely; she would treat them as mere members of the family; and, if there was any one thing more than another that she disliked, it was ceremony. Thus spoke Mrs. Buskin, but her conduct was the reverse of her words, and who could think otherwise; for what English housewife of the old school was to be found, who was not ready to make promises, and then to fuss and labour for the entertainment of her friends, the maintenance of her household dignity, and the display of her husband's wealth and station? Alice was dispatched home on some idle pretence, but, in reality, to prepare for the reception of the visitors. Buskin was secretly sent in another direction, to obtain a salmon, a fish which at that period sometimes ascended the Itchen as far as Winchester; or a leash of trout; and he was also bid to invite Mr. and Mrs. Fidge to join them in the afternoon, the former to smoke a pipe with the alderman, and the latter to drink a dish of tea with the ladies. To cover the deception, she next invited them to take a turn through

the cathedral precincts, to survey the rows of lime and elm which the king had planted with his own hands; perhaps they might manage to get a peep of the royal bowling green, or see his majesty's last litter of puppies, or see Lady Nelly Gwyn riding harum-scarum round the Close. They complied, and their guide so skilfully contrived matters, that as soon as one wish was gratified, to raise another, and thus detain them till she thought all things had been duly prepared at home.

In the meanwhile, the gaily altered and blooming damsel had been metamorphosised into an industrious housewife. The smart habiliments were carefully laid aside, and now in plain attire and with bared arms, assisted by a strapping country wench, performs the culinary offices for her aunt. Her checks present the glow of health, and she was more lovely than when she graced the company in the great hall. She understood her aunt's wishes, and resolved to exceed them. The old cumbersome walnut-tree dining table, with its many legs, was removed from its accustomed place to the middle of the room; the best linen was looked out, the family plate again saw the daylight, and received from her hand a polish that rendered every article like a mirror. The best of everything was in requisition—and the best of everything made its appearance.

In good time the alderman returned bringing with him, in a basket, a fine salmon; which, as he stated, he got from old mother Hicks, whilst Jack her husband was gone into the Close to find a customer.

"I bid a pretty price for it, Alice, or the old hag wouldn't have spared him; yet I think I shall catch it, if Jack did find a customer. Won't it please Aunt?"

"I am sure it will, my dear uncle. Here, Janet, take the fish, and off with him to the pump, and I will be with you in a minute."

Buskin expressed his surprise, at what had already been done, and kindly tendered his services.

"No, uncle—Janet and I can do it."

The old man would have persisted in rendering assistance, had not Alice jokingly threatened to pin a dishclout to his coat.

Mistress Buskin was an old stager, and did not return home with her friends till every preparation had been completed; and then, though well pleased, a smile and a nod were all the thanks Alice received—words would have revealed the secret.

The dinner, though not more than of an ordinary character

to a well-to-do tradesman of the present day, was, to dame Ryeland, the wife of a substantial yeoman—a splendid banquet. At their own house fish of any kind was hardly known, and salmon she had never tasted; meat, save that of the hog, seldom found its way to their table, not oftener than once in the month; the condiments, were objects of wonder as much as taste; and, then the style in which the meal was served up was such as never could have entered her mind. The dessert consisted not only of ripe cherries and strawberries, with which they were familiar, but French plums and other dried fruits, which she never before had seen, or tasted. Then, besides the spicey mead, black-currant and other home-made wines, there were others that had been imported from the sunny lands of the south.

The visitors were delighted, and apologized over and over again for the trouble they had given, but their hostess persisted in declaring that they had given none—that it was quite a family affair; and insinuated that what they saw was nothing more than ordinary. The ladies now stared with surprise and it is nothing wonderful that their surprise should contain a small spice of envy. Dame Ryeland could not help comparing her everlasting flitches of bacon with the dainty fare of which she had just partaken; and Miss Stubbs had almost made up her mind to discard her sweetheart, Tom Harrow of Monks Barton, in the hopes of obtaining the attention of some young cit, and to live in luxury all the days of her life.

Early in the afternoon our old friend, the Townclerk, and Mistress Fidge made their appearance. Of the former, we have had our say, but the lady was of a very different temperment, and as opposed to the functionary, as our antipodes are to us. Fair, fat, and forty—happy in herself—happy in her family—happy everywhere. Fortunate was Timothy in such a partner. He would, through habit, fret and fume at the veriest trifle; make mountains out of mole-hills, and create for himself trouble and anxiety, but his gentle partner was to him a guardian angel. For when needlesly irritated she answered not, patiently heard, softly smiled, and then with soft words would pour the balm of peace into his self-lacerated soul.

The customary introductions and salutations were hardly over, when the door again opened to admit Alderman Wongar and his son Peter, or "Master Peter," as he was generally called.

The former was a hale, strong man—a brawny, hard-featured mortal, whose countenance, gait, and hands, proclaimed that in his time he had done his share of work. There was a peculiar cast with one of his eyes, whilst they both betrayed craft or low cunning; he was well-to-do in the world, and was willing people should know it, also that he had risen by his own industry and perseverance; and would tell them that he was the child of whom no one knew, was reared as a pauper, many a time he escaped utter starvation, and that till past his teens did not know a home, or had even slept in a bed. In his younger days he was a drover's boy, and attended markets, a circumstance which was not lost upon him, for his eyes and ears were always open, and he stored what he heard, and marked what he saw. Next a butcher's cad—worked hard, lived hard, and slept hard, but ever attentive, abstemious in his habits, and niggardly in his disposition. By and bye he became the purchaser of two sheep, which he disposed of in the shambles with such profit as induced him to try again; and he did try and that successfully, and what with his industry, perseverance, thrift, and judgment (for what the boy picked up the man made use of), he became a thriving tradesman. One object, and one only, he seemed to have in view—the making of money; and every succeeding year found him richer than the last. In state affairs and local differences he took no part. Years rolled on, "many his gains, his children few," an only son, when he was elected a member of the Corporation. Although pleased with the compliment, as a recognition of his wealth, he paused before he accepted the honour; and, it was not till he was satisfied, that it would be to his pecuniary interest, that he paid the customary fees, and took the oaths, and was enrolled as a freeman, and a few years later was elected an alderman. He was made of too stern stuff to be diverted from his favourite pursuit by municipal duties or honours, and he continued to slave, as he had done all his life, in adding house to house, and field to field. Although avaricious and close-fisted in general, he was not without his good qualities and generous points. A kind and gentle husband to a sickly and capricious wife; a fond and indulgent father and, saving occasional ebullitions of temper, a good and generous master, who, in the days of prosperity, never forgot, or sought to hide, that he had often felt the sharp tooth of want.

His son, Master Peter, was a spoiled boy, and realized the

old saying—"One child, three fools." In his childhood he was caressed, petted, and but very seldom corrected, even by his father, who, in other matters was a stern man, but here was his weak point. As he grew up towards manhood, his whims and caprices were gratified by the mother, and winked at by the sire; and when death deprived him of the former, he became doubly endeared to the latter. To the business of his father he had a decided repugnance, as being low and vulgar; and, after long hesitation as to his future course, he became an apprentice to Alderman Tiffity, the principal mercer of the city. Of late he had made acquaintance with many of the loose hangers-on of the Court, and imitated their vices and follies; for he was a fast young man, on remarkably good terms with himself; an exquisite in his own conceit—vain, silly, and presumptuous. The old man was blind to these things, and was somewhat proud of the follies and vices of the boy. To be sure, at times, he would call him "Simple Simon," instead of Peter; and then, after his growl and grumble, would let the youngster proceed in his own course without let or hindrance; continuing to work hard, and refusing his age its necessary and dearly-earned rest, that the boy may, in another day, become the foremost man of all the city.

"Trimming hot, brother," commenced Wongar, addressing himself to Buskin; and then, turning to the ladies,

"Bless your little hearts, a merry time to you; ah, Dame Ryeland, you look as young as ever—I suppose you never mean to grow old;" and then he went with something to say, in the shape of rough compliments, to the rest of the ladies;

"And here's my son Peter thinks himself man enough for a sweetheart; ten years time I say, but you can't fix old heads on young shoulders. Come, I must have been double-threes or more, when you and I were sweethearts, Mistress Buskin." The lady blushed and did not know where to turn her head, but the butcher went on, "you were living with old Mother Wagstaff, at the Mermaid! Can't you remember it was a hot piping day like this I asked you to marry me? under the great big mulberry-tree at the bottom of the garden."

Mrs. Buskin was ready to faint; and Peter interposed—

"Father!"

"Simon!" growled the other, and proceeded, "You were then a real pretty wench—such a face—such curls—such eyes—and such ancles. Why Nelly Gwyn is a fool to what

you were; but Buskin was the lucky dog to beat us all; and how it was, I can't tell, for he never had much to say for himself."

Buskin took it in good part, smiled, and invited his friend to fill his pipe, which was done, but Wongar seemed unwilling to forego his banter, though he diverted its course, and, turning to the functionary, went on—

"Mr. Townclerk, I give you joy on your new appointment, for they tell me you are going into the King's service."

The other smiled and rubbed his hands.

"I be a loyal subject, as you know Mr. Townclerk, and a dear lover of fun; now I have a nice young bull, not at all savage; and, as I was coming from home, my chaps bothered me to let them take him down into the Close, and give him a bit of a bait, in honour of our new freeman, King Charles."

"And you did consent?" exclaimed the townclerk in an eager tone.

"Humph! I did and I didn't," replied the other leisurely, "I suppose they will take it; I should if I was they. I like a bull-bait when there are some plucky dogs. When I was a boy, they used to have the baiting before the mayor's house; and his majesty may take it as a compliment."

The butcher paused and gazed steadily at the functionary, whose colour came and went in quick succession; the veins of the head became prominent, and there was an uplifting of the hands and—

"There, there—I declare it must not be. You ought not to have done it."

"Done it! done what? man."

"To have sent a savage bull into the Close—It is downright sacrilege, I declare; and his majesty will be offended, and the poor town-clerk will have all the blame. Oh dear! oh dear!"

"Gently man, you are too much in a hurry: the beast is not gone yet; my chaps want some staunch dogs. I think Mike Ruddle has got one of the right sort, and he can tell them whether they ought to go."

"He! he! that drunken rascal would do anything for drink; never goes to church to say amen, but he is three-parts muzzy! do you think that I, as legal adviser to the Corporation, would delegate my duty to a sotting sergeant-at-mace? I must go, I must go! oh dear, oh dear, Job never was a townclerk."

"Stay, man—don't be in a hurry. Mike knows what he is about, and will see his worship, as I told them."

"There again, more trouble and vexation. I wish the bull was dead. Sir Pharaoh will bring it before the next court, and I shall be blamed; oh dear! oh dear!" and there was then an uplifting of the hands and stretching out of the fingers, followed by a hasty preparation for his somewhat speedy departure.

The company were taken by surprise, all but old Buskin, who was sound asleep, with his pipe in his mouth; and though the bowl contained no fire, his lips continued to perform the duty mechanically, which by long habit had become natural to them; and Mrs. Fidge, who looked sceptically at the butcher, and with an arch smile and a gentle shake of the head, fairly put the hard-featured man out of countenance. Venus triumphed over Mars, who now sounded a retreat.

"Come hither, boy," said Wongar beckoning to his son, "Get you where you will for half-an-hour; mum, I say—you take it," and Master Peter bowed to the company, and left the room, and then the old man went on, "Now, Mr. Townclerk, I have staid the bull-bait, and we shall hear no more about it: and so you can be merry again; come fill your pipe, and let us be jolly, and here is to your good health."

The functionary was relieved; rubbed his hands, and was the happiest of mortals, when Master Peter returned and informed the learned gentleman that one of the town-sergeants had arrived with a message from the mayor, requesting his immediate attendance.

He was again put out, and commenced, "They talk of the patience of Job; but I am sure he had no more troubles than a townclerk. Alice, my dear, take a friendly advice, never marry a townclerk; never a moment to call his own. I wonder what his worship can want? I say, Mistress Buskin, I have to wait upon his majesty to-morrow; a charming man is the king. You must come to Winchester one of these fine days, Dame Ryeland, and we will all take a turn in the royal gardens: perhaps we shall see his majesty and Lord Halifax at a game of bowls." Here he rubbed his hands, and chuckled with delight at the anticipation; and then again turning to Mrs. Buskin, "His majesty is a most amiable creature: perhaps he would knight our friend Buskin, and then your title would be 'My Lady Buskin.'"

Just then the sleeping alderman snored more lustily than

before, and the exertion caused the pipe to drop from his lips and fall to the ground.

"I say, old fellow," ejaculated Wongar, "you have lost your better half."

Mrs. Buskin stared, and the alderman rubbing his lips stared also — at what, he did not know, for he was but half-awake; but the other proceeded, "Don't fret, man, for if you have lost your pipe, you are to be made a lord; Earl Gammon, or Viscount Double-skim, I suppose."

"Now there, now there," interposed the townclerk piteously, "I said nothing about a peerage; I said his majesty might knight him, as he did Sir Pharaoh this morning, and you too, for you long have been one of St. Martin's squires."

"But I don't know it, only I give all the butcher chaps of the city a supper on St. Martin's day, when the first dish is served up to the sound of marrow-bones and cleavers, because St. Martin was a jolly butcher, and wore a blue frock and used a bright steel."

"Ha—ha—" ejaculated the townclerk, delighted with the opportunity of showing his learning; "St. Martin was not a butcher, but a very brave and famous soldier; and once on a very cold night, the ground was covered with snow, and the wind was blowing bitterly from the north-east, bringing with it sleet and hail that almost blinded his eyes, when he met a naked beggar; then St. Martin pulled off his cloak, and with his sword cut it in two, and gave one half to the shivering and half frozen beggar; and that very night he had a vision, and he saw who that seeming beggar was—and then he gave up soldiering, turned monk, and last became a bishop; and when he died the Pope made him a saint."

The ladies were pleased with the legend, but it was lost upon the butcher.

"I say, if that be it, Mr. Townclerk—no more beef and mutton, ale and punch, will I find upon the eleventh of November. We won't have any shams. Thank ye, but I don't think my chaps will."

"There now," replied the other, "I would not have said it, if I thought you would have been so hard; but no matter, if his majesty is as good as his word, I will make it up to the poor kill-bulls, who always were such a wicked set, as never to have a saint of their own, and then stole one from the soldiers; ha, ha, they shall have ale and punch and wine too. I shall see the king to-morrow," and then he rubbed his

hands, when Master Peter again reminded him of the mayor's message.

"Oh dear! oh dear! was there ever a poor fellow so bothered as I am; what with his majesty and his worship, St. Martin and the butchers' suppers, with punch and ale, and bull and mastiffs, are enough to turn one's brain. I hope that drunken Mike has not said a word about the bull-baiting in the Close. Mistress Buskin, expect me again: and so ladies, good bye," and his learnedship made his departure.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MAYOR.

"One whom fortune hath shot up to some office or authority; and he shoots up his neck to his fortune, and will not bait you an inch of either. His very countenance and gesture bespeak how much he is; and if you understand him not, he tells you, and concludes every period with his place, which you must and shall know."

BISHOP EARLE.

THE residence of the mayor was in one of the largest and best houses in the city, but its inmates were few in number; consisting, in addition to the owner, of a housekeeper of mature age, an under maid-servant, and a man of all-work, then generally known as the shuffler. Soon after his return from St. John's House, they were summoned to attend the august presence of their master, and were then pompously informed, that in speaking to, or of him, they must always say "Sir Pharaoh," under the penalty of his utmost displeasure, and their own immediate dismissal, for that his majesty had been most graciously pleased to create him a knight. Dick the shuffler stared at Betty the servant-maid, and Betty the servant-maid stared at Dick the shuffler, for they had not the least idea of what a knight could be; or had either of them heard of one, except that King Arthur made Jack the Giant-killer a knight of his Round Table; and that the table was to be seen in the County Hall.

"Mind you, Mistress Tartling; and you, Betty Maypole; and you, Dick—what your other name may be I do not know, my orders are positive, and must be strictly obeyed—you

may go," and go they did, but not before the housekeeper made a very formal and ceremonious curtsey, tingling a large bunch of keys which, in accordance to the fashion of the day, she wore in front of her vest, followed by an awkward attempt on the part of Betty to imitate her superior, and an extravagant bow from Dick, who brought his head half-way to the ground, which he partly accomplished by holding hard to the hair of his forehead.

Sir Pharaoh was now left to muse upon what he thought his rising fortune. He had ever deemed himself a marvellous proper man, prided himself upon his good looks, and still more upon his tact and judgment.

He had been a resident of Winchester about ten years, but of his previous life nothing was known, and he studiously avoided all reference to it; which induced some to think he was not the right heir to the property which he held. He had early determined to obtain the dictatorship of the city, to which he thought his wealth entitled him. Determined to attain his object, he entered the lists with a temper defiant of insult: with industry and perseverance which no obstacle could baulk; a self-assurance which nothing could abash; and a conscience so pliable as would justify any act; and he thus contrived to engross the entire management of the business of the Corporation, and without his sanction nothing was done. Having succeeded in the city, he next looked forward to become a foremost man in the county. The qualities of his mind, and his reputed wealth served him well, and by dint of assurance, he managed to become known to William Lord Russell, and other county notables of the Country party, contumeliously known as Whigs. Ledger was prepared to go all lengths, avowed himself a republican in principle, a deadly enemy of tyrants, a Protestant to the back-bone, and an uncompromising exclusionist of the Duke of York. It was whilst he was making known his patriotic and religious views, he learned that the king intended to make Winchester his occasional residence, and a sudden change came over him; he veered about, and then, with brazen effrontery, denounced the members of the Country party as traitors, ridiculed the alleged Popish plots, vehemently maintained the duke's right to the succession, and warmly upheld the divine right of kings, the Lord's Anointed, being above all human law; and became the most obsequious of toadies. To the young courtiers he was known as a man of wealth, and as they were ready to

make any sacrifice to obtain money for present purposes, Ledger was the man they were glad to meet with, and he equally rejoiced in their acquaintance. Solid cash was forthcoming on high interest, when a sufficient security could be found, and by these means several of the young nobility were like flies, enticed into the web of the crafty spider; and not being of a hasty temperament he would abide his time, and watch the ripening of the pear.

Sir Pharaoh was reclining on his couch, indulging in a day-dream of his rising fortune, with a coronet in the perspective, when he was aroused by a loud tap at the door of his room; and before he could answer it, the door flew open, and two gaily-dressed gentlemen thrusting his servant aside entered. He recognised the intruders as Lord Cornbury and Sir James Blount, two of his customers; but before he could say a word they had advanced into the middle of the room, and, uncovering their heads and waving their plumed hats in their hands, commenced,

CORNBURY.—"All hail, Sir Pharaoh! hail to thee, Mayor of Winchester!"

BLOUNT.—"All hail, Sir Pharaoh! hail to thee, King Charles's knight!"

CORNBURY.—"All hail, Sir Pharaoh! hail, all hail!"

The knight looked almost as much astonished, as did Macbeth when he received the greeting of the weird sisters; and from the same cause the salutation revealed the hidden secrets of the heart.

Within a few moments he was sufficiently recovered as to invite his visitors to be seated; and then, most obsequiously, enquired what might be their business?

"Not money to-night, Sir Pharaoh," replied Cornbury, who had thrown himself upon the couch. "My Lord Clarendon has remitted me a goodly sum, though accompanied by a sermon worthy of old Kenn; so, if I say my prayers to-night, in my orisons, my honoured sire shall be duly remembered. There will be no unlocking of escrutoires, or signing of deeds; and pens and ink can be dispensed with."

"To what, then," replied Ledger, in his blandest tone, "am I to attribute this honoured visit?"

"We are come," said Cornbury, "not to receive, but to pay."

The knight was taken by surprise, looked at the one and then at the other; "to pay did you say, my lord?"

"Aye, truly, Sir Pharaoh," said the lord rising from his

seat, and bowing to the knight, an example which was followed by his friend. "We are come to pay our respects, and to offer you our congratulations on the honour which his majesty has conferred on you, a compliment of which you are right worthy. Never did the king's sword descend on a better shoulder; and the modesty evinced, showed that the recipient was of gentle blood."

The new-made knight rose from his seat and bowed to his visitors, and affectedly stammered his thanks, and with mock humility, declared himself undeserving of such a mark of regard, which his sacred majesty in the natural goodness of his heart had conferred upon him. He would treasure the recollection of it till his last hour.

"Nonsense," replied the lord, "your innate modesty blinds you to your merits. But his majesty is acquainted with them, and trust me, Sir Pharaoh, though Rowley has but the heart of a dove, he has the eye of an eagle. Your devoted loyalty and your great influence in this ancient city, has been marked alike by the king and the royal duke.

"To both I bear true allegiance, my lord, and would willingly sacrifice a life in the cause of either."

"Spoke like a true patriot, not like such pestiferous fellows as Russell and Wallop and Norton, and others of your county, who call themselves patriots whilst they are hatching treason."

"Such persons I abominate, my lord. I have ever yielded implicit submission to his majesty's person and undoubted prerogative;" and, to give force to the expression, placed his right hand on his left breast.

The courtiers exchanged significant glances, unmarked by the knight.

"A fair field, Sir Pharaoh," commenced Blount, "is now open to a person of your rank and abilities; and, at the present moment, the controllership of the duke's household, a post of considerable profit, is vacant; and, were you to signify you were but Popishly inclined, you could command it."

"I have ever regarded his royal highness as a deeply-injured person. My heart has often bled for him," replied Ledger with seeming sincerity.

"Stay, stay!" said Cornbury, "you can best serve the king's cause as a Parliament man. The representation of Winchester is unmistakeably in your hands."

Ledger nodded assent.

"Parliament is your proper sphere; and then, to a devoted

loyalist, a step into the Council chamber is not difficult, and where your business-like habits would be properly appreciated; and Heaven knows they are much needed."

The knight, with perfect composure, replied "that he should be proud to serve his majesty in any capacity."

"Which shall speedily be made known to him, and also to my kinsman the duke," spoke Cornbury, who continued—

"By the great Jupiter, and little Cupid to boot, I had almost forgotten my errand. I bring you, Sir Pharaoh, an invitation from my Lady Shrewsbury, who will be happy to see you at Avington, on Thursday next; and I am to be your conductor."

"I feel exceedingly honoured; I know her ladyship but slightly."

"No matter, her ladyship thus early recognizes your rank, and yourself as a public character. I warrant ye, the gay Duchess of Portsmouth will bite her nails with vexation, at being forestalled by the countess. Go, you must! her ladyship holds a splendid court—lords and high-born dames, and blooming damsels—beauty, rank, and fashion; and none more welcome than Sir Pharaoh Ledger."

"Indeed, my lord, I cannot refuse."

"And I prophecy," said Blount, "that your good looks, commanding figure, and courtly manners will serve you as well in social, as your known abilities and devoted loyalty will in public life."

"Sir James, you flatter," said Ledger.

"Not a tythe part of a parson's tythe on a grain of barley. You are duly qualified for any company, talent, manner, rank, and, I doubt not, birth."

The knight was somewhat puzzled, but not abashed; sat silently a few minutes, and then spoke—

"The Ledgers are of a very ancient family; and, as I have been told, descended from that famous soldier Wat Tyler."

"The courtiers bit their lips, and again exchanged glances, when Cornbury said:

"By St. Dunstan, that took the Devil by his nose, prove but your genealogical table, Sir Pharaoh, and you will cast most of us into the shade. My grandfather was but a simple Wiltshire squire, though he became afterwards Lord Chancellor. Now-a-days, pedigree is only asked for in the male line; and Grafton and Fitzjames, who can speak feelingly on the subject, say that no matter who is the dam, if the sire

be good. By the way, Sir Pharaoh, you must be introduced as a member of our Club, 'The Loyal Buffers;' many of your acquaintances are amongst them: Frank Kimpton, Durley, and Grafton. I will propose you this very night."

"And, with exceeding pleasure, I will second you," replied Blount.

The knight smiled, and again rose from his seat to thank them; and then cautiously said, "some may object to it. I am but a simple knight."

"Woe to the man that does," replied Cornbury impetuously. I'll send his soul post-haste to Heaven, if Heaven will take the present off my hands."

"No fear, Sir Pharaoh; your rank is a halo of protection round you. And remember Thursday, Lady Shrewsbury will expect you, so we must not disappoint the ladies. Now's your time, Sir Pharaoh, embrace fortune whilst she smiles, or she will pinch you in revenge. If you are matrimonially inclined, many a titled dame would feel honoured in the hands of the king's knight, and at Avington you will find a bevy."

"My lord, you make me your everlasting debtor."

"I wish I were not yours, Sir Pharaoh," replied the lord. "You did me a kindness and I will repay it, though gratitude is little prized in these degenerate days; but honour man, honour, Sir Pharaoh," placing his hands forcibly on his breast, "tells me what I should do. So, for the present, adieu!"

"Farewell, Sir Pharaoh, we shall often meet hereafter."

"I trust we may; Lord Cornbury and Sir James, your obliged and honoured servant," said Ledger, bowing obsequiously. The company separated equally pleased. The courtiers had hitherto maintained a gravity of countenance, which within a few minutes was to give way to the most boisterous mirth.

"Sir Pharaoh, again being left by himself, mused upon what had been said by either party. He was not wholly deceived by the professions of the young men; not that his mind refused credence to their gross flattery, for he questioned whether they had not sinister designs; but he soon reconciled himself on that head, and that he was a match for them, and that they would not catch a sleeping weasel. He had advanced money to Cornbury, and also to Blount; but then he had ample security—where was then the obligation of which his lordship spoke? could it be intended that he should keep the transaction secret; that he should do

for his own sake; however he would take advantage of the lord's fears, and embrace his offers; and he doubted not that, in any society, he should prove himself equal to it; and, even at the gaming table, calm judgment and nice calculations would enable him to enrich himself at the expense of roysterers, half-blinded with wine and inflamed by passion, and to Avington he would go. He surveyed himself in the mirror, from which he could not divert his eyes. At every glance his countenance became more captivating, and his figure more commanding. He then stalked the room, bowing to one chair, and then to another; and, every now and then, pausing and throwing himself in what he thought a graceful attitude. At length tired by his exertion, he reclined himself on his couch, and sleep overtook him, when, before his eyes arose, in quick succession—Lady Shrewsbury, her dazzling company and gilded saloons; — the King's court — the House of Commons,—the Council-table,—the Peerage,—and a marriage in a cathedral,—royalty condescending to act as father,—in all of which he himself was the principal actor.

CHAPTER XV.

MAGDALEN HILL FAIR.

"Come, Goody, stop your humdrum wheel;
Sweep up your orts, and reach my hat—
Old joys revived, once more I feel
'Tis Fair Day! *aye, and more than that.*"
BLOOMFIELD.

My Lord of Huntingdon did not over estimate the penalty which the youthful courtiers of a dissolute king would have to pay for their wanton and cowardly attack on an innocent person, when he set it down at his majesty's displeasure for three days, and then the transaction to be a standing joke at court for seven long years.

Foreright's first business, on his return to Winchester, was to visit Goody Kalendar, whom he found in better spirits than he could have anticipated; and he was greatly surprised to see Alice Greenly at her bedside, reading to her out of the

Book of books. The worthy alderman was not aware, nor did he seek to know, what had induced the damsel to visit the house in which she had hitherto been a stranger, but we will reveal the secret. The sudden disappearance of Maurice Kalendar had become the talk of the whole town, and found its way to the house of Alderman Buskin; and various were the surmises which arose, and by some it was confidently asserted that Maurice had been waylaid and kidnapped by Lord Cornbury, out of revenge for the affront given him at St. John's House. This was sufficient for the poor girl, who felt that she had unwittingly been the cause of the young man's misfortune, and of great sorrow to his mother; upon which she resolved to go and see her, tell all, ask her forgiveness, and then do what best she could to comfort her. Having obtained the permission of her uncle and aunt, Alice was soon at the bedside of Mistress Kalendar. Their meeting would have been painful, but fortunately, Master Coram, who had just left the house, had informed the mother of the safety of her son; and which she revealed to her visitor, who, in speaking of Maurice's behaviour, blushed whilst she spoke of how bravely he had comported himself in her behalf.

Alice was on her second visit when Foreright came in, who having been informed of the visit of Coram, and the news he had brought, narrated his own adventures, to the amusement alike of both his hearers.

"Bless ye, alderman," said the elder; "you never-tire, old man; how I do thank you, Heaven knows! But I can't, for the world, get it out of my mind how kind, very kind, of that Papish gentleman; for he has been here again to-day, and tells me Maurice is much better. I did not know before that any of that poor benighted set were such pure Christians as he is!"

"Aye, Goody, there are good and bad in every flock," replied the alderman; "and the Papists be Christians, as well as we Protestants; and the only difference is, they are Peter's men, and we are Paul's men."

Foreright's next errand was to deliver his packet for Master Coram, and then that for the Duke of York; after which he went to the Deanery, and sought to obtain an interview with the king; and was informed by a servant who knew him, that his majesty was to be found in the Wilderness, meaning an adjoining pasture, which was greatly over-run with underwood and straggling vegetation.

Foreright, who knew the place well, made no hesitation in going into it, and, after wandering about for some time, perceived his majesty, who was attended by Will Foster, standing on one side of a rapidly running stream, engaged in feeding some tame water-fowl with small cakes, which they took from his royal hand; whilst on the opposite side of the bank there was Mistress Gwyn seated on the grass, amused by the familiarity and voracity of the birds.

When Foreright had approached within a few yards of the king, he stopped, doffed his hat, and patiently waited for an invitation to advance. He had not to wait long, when the king who had caught sight of him exclaimed—

"Heyday, who have we here—making bold to trespass on our privacy?—ah! I see now—our old friend, Sir Peppercorn—step forward, my honest fellow—such as you are always welcome."

Emboldened by the invitation, Foreright advanced and bowed to his sovereign.

"Well, what is your pleasure? no petition, or memorial to present, I hope; but speak out, man!"

In no way abashed, the alderman told his tale, or rather lodged his complaint against Lord Cornbury and others, the particulars of which are already known to our readers. During the narration, the monarch looked grave, and then there was an uneasy movement of the shoulders, as if there was trouble in the perspective, which he thus sought to relieve.

"My loving and dutiful subject, your complaint shall be enquired into; for who has more right to justice at our hands than those whose hearts are as full of loyalty as the capsicum is of fire; we will make every enquiry.—What say you, Will Foster, have you heard ought touching this complaint?"

"Aye, please your majesty," answered Will, "I think there is something in what the alderman has said."

"Then these pert boys must answer for it," said the king hastily.

"Summoned to your royal presence," said Foreright, eagerly, "and confronted by myself and witnesses."

"That we cannot promise, but you may console yourself that they will be brought to book, and that we shall have our answer within three days, on the pain and penalty of their not being allowed to present themselves at our court, or receiving any favour at our hands; and now, Sir Peppercorn, you have our license to withdraw, as you see our other

subjects," pointing to the ducks, "are clamorous for their supper."

The alderman made a ceremonious bow and departed, leaving the occupier of the throne of Alfred to his childish pastime.

Three days were past and gone, and yet there was no message from the king; the fourth, fifth, and sixth were equally uncommunicative, as were the seventh, eighth, and ninth; and now, for the first time in his long life, Foreright found there was truth in that passage in Holy Writ, "Put not your trust in princes." On the tenth day he heard that the king and duke, with the whole court, were about to remove from Winchester to Oxford; and upon further enquiry, he learned that Lord Cornbury and others had been gone some days.

Warmly attached as the alderman was to his sovereign and a kingly government, he felt himself too much an Englishman not to stand up for his supposed right; and therefore determined to see the king once more, and demand that justice which the other had promised him. He again presented himself at the Deanery; and, even to his own surprise, was again permitted to stand before the king.

It will greatly shorten our narrative in length, though not in substance, to state that the indolent and pleasure-loving king, whose only abomination was trouble, instead of summoning the offending parties before him, contented himself with sending a verbal message to Lord Cornbury, through Will Foster, that he should expect an explanation of the circumstances of the alleged affray.

Upon the delivery of the royal message the young lord took council of his associates, and it was determined that a counter-statement (for they obtained the particulars from Foster), should be prepared and sent to the king, accompanied by a short note, signed by three of them. As at that period men were to be found who would swear to anything, however false, it was not difficult to obtain two men who deposed upon oath before Sir Pharaoh Ledger, who certified he believed them to be true men (although he would have trusted neither to the value of a groat), that Maurice Kalendar and five other disorderly characters of the city were the aggressors; that they attacked the party of gentlemen who were coming down the river in the boat with stones, crying out, "We will have no Papists'!" and "Down with the Whore of Babylon!" That when the gentlemen landed, Lord Cornbury attempted to

remonstrate with them, by telling them they were true Protestants; upon which Kalendar laid hold of my lord and attempted to throstle him; and, in the scuffle which took place, Kalendar fell into the water; and at the same time some more rough fellows came up and joined the others, so that the gentlemen were obliged to withdraw, and make their way to Winchester which they did, leaving their boat behind. The depositions contained other allegations against Kalendar, to the effect that he had been heard to say, that he would have the life of Lord Cornbury, even if he were hanged for it afterwards.

This document was duly forwarded to the king, and although he knew that what it contained was false, was amused by the effrontery of the parties, and said that Parliament in its justice ought to pension the informants, since their statements were equally true, as those of Titus Oates, whom they had rewarded by a good round sum.

"So, Sir Peppercorn," commenced the monarch, "you are come again; I warrant ye that you cannot prove your descent from the patriarch Job, but your well-known loyalty is your excuse. Touching the matter of my Lord Cornbury I have, as I promised, called his lordship to account, and he has replied by a letter signed by himself, Sir C. Kimpton, and Captain Blount; and accompanied by a deposition signed by two householders, as verified by your mayor, giving a very different complexion to the case, and although I may think they were in the wrong, here is evidence which I cannot gainsay."

"But why don't they meet us face to face, your majesty?"

"That might be unpleasant, old friend," said the king, "but however I have directed my lord Halifax to send to each of them that which they will long remember. And now, my heart of oak, I would, before I leave Winchester, confer some favour on you as a mark of our high esteem for your courage and loyalty."

"The greatest favour you can do me, your majesty," said the unabashed alderman, "is justice to Maurice Kalendar."

"He is duly cared for by the Lord High Admiral; and it will be his own fault if he does not rise high in the world."

The alderman would have again referred to the old subject, if the king would have allowed him, who having extracted from him that his family consisted of two grandsons, said:

"It were a pity that acorns of such an oak should not be

planted in a congenial soil; and, therefore, to give them a chance, they shall be entered as scholars of Winchester College, with the right of succeeding to New College; not as founder's kin, but as the king's scholars, so that they might rise, step by step, perhaps, one day — one to be Lord Chancellor, and the other Archbishop of Canterbury."

Ten days after the above stated conversation, the court had left Winchester for Oxford; the king was domiciled at Christ Church, and the Duke of York at New College; and to avoid giving scandal to the University authorities, Mistress Gwyn had lodgings in the town of Abingdon, whilst our city relapsed into its former state of a quiet country town.

Sir Pharaoh was so inflated with the honour of knighthood, that his arrogance became insufferable, and day by day he rendered himself more obnoxious to his fellow-citizens. For some weeks the Townclerk delighted himself, but tired his wife and friends with the anticipations of some place of honour and profit, through the nomination of his majesty. Philip and Walter Newbolt were admitted to the College, enrolled as Wykehamists, and sported their serge gowns; whilst Maurice Kalendar after his recovery, instead of resuming his business as a whitesmith, accepted a situation offered him by the Lord High Admiral; and having arranged with his patron Foreright for the maintenance of his mother, left Winchester for the royal dockyard at Deptford.

The conduct of the king was a damper to the exuberant loyalty of the old alderman; and he, at length, arrived at the conclusion that kings can be false as well as their subjects, and his only consolation was the belief that the Royal Martyr would not have acted in that fashion. The case of Kalendar being off his mind he immediately directed his attention to that of Bob Allen's daughter, for he would recognise her by no other name; and frequent were the consultations which he had with Master Denny, who either as chorister-lad, lay-vicar, sacristan, or chapter-clerk, had been connected with the Cathedral more than sixty years, and consequently was as well acquainted with the parties mentioned in either of the wills as Foreright could be. He was however more cautious, and whatever he might think, he would go no farther than to admit, that it was a case of great suspicion, which ought to be cleared up. To recall to memory forgotten incidents and occurrences which might bear upon, and perhaps help to elucidate the mystery, these ancient gentlemen might be seen in

close conversation for hours together, whilst walking up and down the aisle of the church; and a greater zest was given to these inquiries from what we are about to relate.

The well-known fair on Magdalen Hill, near Winchester, on the 2nd of August was, previous to the alteration of the style 1752, held on the 22nd of July, being the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, according to the church of Rome. The fair may claim an antiquity of nearly seven centuries, and owes its origin to the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen, founded by Bishop Toclyve towards the close of the eleventh century, which stood a short distance to the north of the fair ground. The grant to hold a fair, or market, was generally one of the endowments either of a monastery or hospital, as a source of revenue. At the period of our tale, the hospital was deserted; the master, brothers, and sisters having removed to Winchester, whilst the chapel and other buildings were in ruins, and so they continued till about seventy years since, when they were pulled down and the materials sold; but down to that time service was read once a year in the chapel.

Two centuries ago this fair retained much of its original character, as a great mart, at which the tradesmen of Winchester, Alresford, Alton, Bishop's Waltham, and the surrounding country could lay in their stocks for the year. There were watches and jewellery from London, broadcloths from Exeter and Gloucester, flannels and cutlery from Salisbury, leather from Abingdon, Romsey, and Ringwood; gloves from Woodstock, worsted from Norwich, shoes from the eastern counties, ploughshares and other iron-work from Sussex, tinware from Cornwall, books from Oxford and London, pottery from Warwickshire, sugar and spices from Bristol, and wines from Southampton; in addition to cheese from Dorset and Somerset, and wool from all the country round.

Much of the above mentioned merchandise was brought on pack-horses, and the remainder in carts and waggons, some drawn by horses, some by oxen, and some by donkeys. Many of the standings, or *shoppes*, as they were designated in old writings, were permanent fixtures, having their walls of mud, and covered with thatch, as may still be seen at Weyhill; and as the majority of the frequenters of the fair could not read at all, names would have been useless, and therefore signs were resorted to, and of the most fantastic characters: golden lambs and blue pigs, a boot which would have fitted Goliath,

a clasp-knife with a blade three feet long, and a pair of scissors which would have taken two strong men to handle.

But business was not the only attraction of the fair, and thousands resorted to it every year for pleasure sake. In Winchester the twenty-second of July had been for centuries considered a red-letter day, for young and old, rich and poor, almost felt it a duty to mount the hill. The apprentices and artisans rejoiced in a day when there was no work to be done, and they were allowed to be their own masters, and certain at the fair to meet their country relatives and old play-fellows. With the inhabitants of the surrounding villages it must have been a very catching time to induce the rustics to continue harvest-work, and forego the long-looked-for pleasure of going to fair. In addition to the above it was the place, by long established usuage, where the members of any family living in different parts of the county would have their annual though temporary re-union, and the same may be said of old friends and acquaintances.

The amusements were then very different to what they have been of late years; there was sure to be bear-baiting, drawing the badger, and cock-fighting; of these sports the first and second were carried on at the back of the booths, and any dog was allowed to enter on its owner paying for it, and the latter, in several of the booths, in which cards and dice were also allowed. To enter these booths there was a charge, and great care was required that he who went in, did not come out penniless. At that time there were no shows containing large collections of wild beasts and birds, but some containing a few specimens, and principally only one. There were, however, wonderful things to be seen, if one could give credence to the statements of the showmen—such as a real mermaid which has been captured at the back of the Isle of Wight, an unicorn brought from Tangiers, and a live cat which had been killed eight times. Then there were peep shows representing all the particulars of the alleged murder of Sir Edmundsbury Godfrey, and the Devil and Pope in council devising a plan for the massacre of all the good Protestants in England, and others, all having a strong tint of the politics of the day.

There were numerous fortune-tellers, who picked up large sums from the credulity and vanity of the public, and also standings at which quacks with outlandish names proclaimed that they had a specific for every complaint. At some distance

from the fair-ground, but on all its approaches, there were preachers, whose earnest countenances, strange costume, and still stranger tones, showed they were fanatics denouncing the wickedness of fairs, urging parties to return home, and threatening vengeance on those who would still persist in their sinful courses.

In the charter granted to the old Hospital to hold a fair, there was a clause empowering it to hold a court of *Pie Poudre*, or justice for Dusty Shoes, on the fair-ground, which court was empowered to hear and settle disputes, and also to take into custody any who might there offend the laws. Prior to the Reformation, the Master of the Hospital duly appointed his Steward, but after the right of holding the fair had passed into lay-hands, the duties were exercised, or were pretended to be, by the constable of Chilcomb, in which parish the fair-ground is situated, and who was honoured by the title of the Mayor of Chilcomb; and who on his inauguration, on the Sunday preceding the fair, invariably entertained his friends and neighbours with bacon and beans, and strong beer without stint. To give importance to his office, he had a small tent on the hill for holding his court, and an assistant; but as the pair had little or nothing to do, it was their wont to spend the day in smoking and drinking, so that at eventide they were generally three-parts drunk.

Magdalen Hill Fair in 1682 differed but slightly from those which had preceded it. Of the several parties whom we have already introduced to the reader, several were on the hill. Of course Will Foster was there, and had been all the day. Old Wongar made his appearance early in the morning, when he drove several hard bargains, and again walked up in the evening to have a smoke and a drain, and to see the fun. Alderman Buskin was also at the fair twice, having come up in the morning to make his purchases of cheese, brushes, and other articles which he retailed; and in the afternoon, when he rode up on horseback with Alice Greenly, the lady being on a pillion, and in the same fashion came the Town-clerk and Mistress Fidge. Nor was the fair without our old friend the ex-Protector, who on his way, called on his friend Coram, and received from him a commission to make sundry purchases for the Silkstead school. In the afternoon he seated himself on a bench at the back of one of the booths, and enjoyed himself by witnessing the bear-baiting. He was attended by his old limping blood-hound, but when asked

to let him go into the ring, said, "No, no, Mosely's fighting days, like mine, are now over, but I will pay for him all the same," and then paid the man sufficient for three dogs. The last in the train was Alderman Foreright, who came over the Down with his eyes fixed on the ground, as if he were pondering on something of importance; and who was met at the entrance of the fair by Foster, who thus addressed him in an undertone:

"All right, alderman, he is here; within ten minutes, I shall be at your service, but I have now to pay a man for two forest ponies. So go in to the Yellow Sparrow booth, and wait for me," and then left.

The alderman walked as far as the Yellow Sparrow booth, and then, instead of going in, turned about and threaded the fair, as if in search of some object, and so he was; presently that very object was in front of him: namely, a platform, in front of which there was in large golden letters, "Dr. Morresco, late Physician to the Bey of Algiers."

The old man stopped, read the inscription two or three small times, rubbed his hands, whilst his old eyes glistened, and from his lips escaped the words, "Ah! wretch, I have thee now."

On a table upon the platform there were a number of packages, little boxes, phials, and gallipots, which a person in Moorish costume, with a wig which half-covered his face, and which was still further disguised by a false beard and moustache, was describing a certain cure for any complaint whether of the mind or body. The alderman looked at, and listened to him for a few minutes; and it is probable that, if he had been less agitated than he was, he would have seen that the greater activity, and the tone of voice, could not be those of the person he sought. His ardour had blinded him and he acted then, as he had all through life, from impulse. He went straight to the standing; and, before he had time to commence, the other had began,

"Aye! I see you are a worthy old gentleman, and, out of respect to your years and venerable appearance, you shall be served at a cheap rate; here is a paste which will recover your bald pate within forty-eight hours, and give your white hairs the colour and gloss of a raven's back; and here's an ointment for the eyes which would enable you to thread a needle at the distance of a yard from your nose."

"Don't bother me about hairs and eyes—I have other business with you."

"But don't be so surly, old friend."

"But I will—and I tell you what—you call yourself Dr. Morresco, but your real name is Francis Tyrrell; and there is a charge againts you for forging old Delpot's will."

"Ha, ha, ha, what have we here a madman? stand out of the way old fellow, and let me serve my customers."

"But I tell you that you are Frank Tyrrell, and my prisoner; and you must come and answer the charge."

"Be off, and that quickly, or I will pull your nose out of your face, although you are so old and crazed in the bargain."

The alderman became more violent, flourished his stick, and called upon the bye-standers to make prisoner of the doctor. The spectators, as may be easily supposed, were divided in opinion and had began arranging themselves on two sides, the one to capture the supposed doctor, and the other to resist it and punish Foreright for his interference, when Foster came up, and the old man began:

"Foster, I charge you as a servant of his majesty ("head nurse to the royal puppies," shouted a Winchester boy), take that man into custody."

Will had more discretion than the alderman, and could see that their object could not be achieved by force, and therefore stept in as a mediator, and spoke to the other.

"Here is some mistake! my friend takes you to be one Francis Tyrrell, but I am certain you are not; but he is old and positive, and the best thing that you can do, is to come to the Mayor of Chilcomb's booth, and satisfy him that you are not, and you shall not suffer injury; and, as a compensation, take you that," placing a piece of gold in his hand; and the other having got a neighbour to take charge of his standing in his absence left, with Foster and Foreright, and followed by some scores of people, for the tent of the Mayor of Chilcomb.

Our Court of *Pie Poudre* was, at the time, but ill prepared for the dispensation of justice, or for the settlement of any dispute, since the judge was decidedly drunk, and his assistant but little better. The parties had no sooner got into the tent, than Foreright made his charge of forgery against the Doctor Morresco, which our Hampshire *Midas* could not understand. He had been judge and constable at the Fair for more than twenty years, and never had a case of forgery before, and didn't mean to have it then, and resumed his seat and pipe. Foster, who had seated himself on the same bench

whispered into his ear that the fellow was either a Jesuit, or an attainted traitor, for whose apprehension there would be a great reward. This suggestion had its effect, and the other immediately ordered that the doctor's wig should be taken off, and the whole of his disguise removed, which was speedily done; and then was revealed a stripling of not more than twenty years of age.

"That is not Tyrrell," exclaimed Foreright; and he added, "I am willing to make you compensation, young man."

"But it, surely, is Tom Wrang, of Hampton, that ran away with Madame Merlay's maid, and went to live with the gipsies," said one of the spectators, who pushed through the crowd to shake hands with the disrobed doctor.

The young man appeared ashamed of his exposure, when Foreright went up to him, and promised him his protection; whilst he sought how to reconcile him to his father, the keeper of the Dolphin Inn, whom the alderman had the pleasure of meeting a short time since on the Bowling Green at Southampton.

Within a short time matters were amicably arranged, the fees of court, ale, and tobacco were duly paid; and the young man having laid aside his Moorish costume, accompanied the alderman to Winchester, and was his guest for some days; whilst Foster undertook the charge of the doctor's standing, and also of his horse and van, with which he had travelled from fair to fair.

With regard to Tyrrell, no further information could be obtained than that a year ago he had induced Wrang to become his assistant; and that, at Botley fair, he was greatly frightened with what a woman had said to him, and said his life was in danger, and the next morning suddenly left his van and ran away; nor did Wrang hear anything about him till a week before, when he met him at Portsdown fair, and paid him what money he had, and expected to meet him again at Michaelmas at Weyhill.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HAMPSHIRE WHIGS.

"Bring every sweetest flower, and let me strew
The grave where RUSSELL lies; whose temper'd blood
With calmest cheerfulness for thee resign'd,
Stain'd the sad annals of a giddy reign."

THOMSON'S SEASONS.

THE banner of Whiggism has floated over Stratton House for the space of nearly two centuries, although its possession has passed from the descendants of the Lord Privy Seal of Henry VIII. to those of a merchant of Exeter.

On the 3rd day of September, 1682, there were assembled within its walls warm supporters of "the cause for which Hampden fell in the field," and which ere long Russell and Sidney were to seal on the scaffold.

The mansion was then a spacious and irregular building, partly monastic and partly baronial in appearance, and most remarkable for its numerous gables and twisted chimnies. Previous to the Reformation it was an occasional residence of the Abbots of Hyde; and at the suppression of that abbey, it passed with its broad lands, extending for miles on every side, into the possession of Lord Chancellor Wriothesley, who obtained at least one-fourth of the monastic spoil of Hampshire. His descendant, the fourth Earl of Southampton, died without male issue, and his estates were divided between his three daughters, of whom the second, Lady Rachel, subsequently married to William Lord Russell, son of the then Earl of Bedford, succeeded to that of Stratton, and here her ladyship and her husband resided at the period of our tale.

Of the house it may be said—it was the growth of centuries, some portions of it having been standing almost from the Conquest, and in it were to be seen massive Norman columns with circular arches, door-ways of the same character, with the well-known zig-zag ornament, but half filled up with accumulated earth; windows varying from the most early lancet to the latest perpendicular, inserted as dictated by the caprice of successive abbots. The south wing was an exception, having been erected at the commencement of the

century, and displayed an abortive attempt at classic architecture, adorned with allegorical figures so much in fashion during the reign of our Northern Solomon. The internal arrangements were equally faulty. In different portions of it were to be seen sculptured armorial bearings of its successive proprietors; here the crossed keys of St. Peter surmounted by an abbatical mitre; there the quartered shield of the Wriothesleys; and lastly, the arms of the Wriothesleys and Russells side by side, or as heralds say, impaled.

The company of whom we spoke consisted of seven persons, of whom six were the possessors of extensive estates in the county, and the seventh was a Scotch divine. They were assembled in secret conclave in a large room with a western aspect, hung round with tapestry, illustrating the story of Susannah, and lighted by an oriel window filled with fragments of stained glass, through which the setting sun poured its rays, heightening the effect of the flaming colours and grotesque figures of the tapestry. At the head of the table was seated the noble owner of the mansion, apparently about forty years of age, with a thoughtful face and grave demeanour, suiting the matter in hand which had reference to the subject which agitated all England—the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession; and their deliberations were marked with all that zeal for civil liberty and religious intolerance so characteristic of what was then called the Country party. On his right hand sat his friend, the celebrated Doctor Gilbert Burnett, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, who acted as secretary; and before whom there was an abundance of writing materials, which he seldom had recourse to—talking being with him a more pleasant occupation; and to him succeeded Sir John Norton, of Rotherfield, the head of a family of long standing in the county, one of whom had represented the county as far back as the reign of Edward II. He was a young man who, as yet, had taken no decided part in the affairs of state, and who attended the present meeting at the solicitation of his kinsman, Colonel Richard Norton, of Southwick, and who sat on his right hand. This latter presented a countenance of very decided character, and the keen glance of his eye showed that age had not chilled the fire of youth, and although now on the verge of seventy, he displayed the same activity of mind, and almost of body, as he did when he gained from the hero of Naseby, the title of "Idle Dick Norton." In the civil war he rendered the Parliament essen-

tial service, and on Cheriton Heath completely routed the royal forces.

On the left hand of the chairman sat a young man of seven-and-twenty, with a fair full face, laughing blue eyes, sandy hair, and bodily frame, which plainly told his Saxon origin. It was Henry Wallop, familiarly known as Red Harry, of Farleigh Wallop and Hurstbourn, the nephew of Lady Rachel, and a descendant in the male line of a thane who held extensive manors in the county in the reign of Edward the Confessor. His countenance pourtrayed a happy disposition, though somewhat choleric, and his whole appearance was such as would lead one to believe that the greater portion of his time was spent in the open air. He was a keen sportsman, and warmly attached to rustic amusements, proud of his ancestry, and held courtiers and foreigners in equal contempt; had recently succeeded to his patrimonial estate, and probably would have contented himself with a mere country life, but for his affection for his aunt, and the great respect he bore Lord Russell. For their sake he ventured into the political contests of the day, and was returned to Parliament; but he soon found out that Westminster was not his proper sphere, nor had he the patience to listen to long speeches, and remain for hours in the same place. Still determined to fight the battle of his party, and that with all the ardour with which he followed the chase, he chalked out a course for himself: namely, the management and control of the representation of the three small boroughs of Andover, Whitchurch, and Stockbridge, in all of which his family, for some centuries, had possessed influence; and in his task he displayed a tact, judgment, perseverance, and a general knowledge of mankind which surprised his friends. With the staid corporators of Andover "the Wallop" was an uncompromising Protestant, the advocate of civil and religious liberty, and the opponent of tyranny in every form; and particularly zealous in the support of municipal privileges, enforcing his argument by an occasional buck from Hurstbourn, famed then, as now, for its venison, and a pipe of wine; for, as he was wont to observe, saints and patriots have a relish for the good things of this world. To the burgage tenants of Whitchurch he was their liege lord, and his word was law. They only knew him as the most liberal of landlords, the kindest of neighbours, and the fame of whose hospitality had spread far and

wide. With the pot-wallopers of Stockbridge, "Squire Harry" was the prince of good fellows. They little cared whether the king or Parliament had the upper hand; and a riot would not have ensued if Mass had been said in their church, and many of them would have as much attended to it as they did to their own simple Liturgy. But they understood eating and drinking, but the latter must be more potent than that which old Father Test so liberally supplied their town; and, in turn, Wallop understood them. Every month there was a feast, to which all the electors (about two score) were invited, and liberal was the supply of strong beer. He paid them frequent visits, and was equally at home at hunting the otter, which then infested the river, feasting on eel-pies, in the dance, or any of their revelries; and was the admired of the women, old and young, and the especial favourite of the children who dogged him at every step. On the present occasion he had listened attentively whilst the business in hand was discussed, but when the reverend doctor got into his rambling stories, picked up in gossip, he would turn to his near neighbour, Sir Richard Mill, of Mottisfont, and indulge in jokes at the expense of the doctor, and compare him with one of the wicked judges whose figure appeared on the tapestry. Sir Richard preferred the banter of the southron to the brogue of the northron, and gave a ready ear to his wanton wit, which he was obliged occasionally to check. Sir Richard Mill was not only the inheritor of the house and lands of the prior and monks of Mottisfont, but the owner of other extensive properties in the county. He was the bosom friend of Wallop, though ten years his senior; and, like him, was an inveterate sportsman. His zeal in the cause was unmistakeable, and he had considerable influence on the Wiltshire border. He was a man of few words, but indomitable spirit and untiring perseverance.

"Well, then," says the chairman, "so much for the county and its southern boroughs, and now for those of the north;" when up rose Sir John Norton:

"My lord, I am ready to pledge myself to the Exclusion Bill and the banishment of all papists and their abettors; and to assert the superiority of Parliament over all kingly power or prerogative, but my youth and inexperience must be my excuse for not standing for the county."

"None better than you, Sir John. You have only to say yea and nay in their right places. The preachments in the

House are too long. We want less talkers and more doers," spoke the chairman.

"Mill and I," said Wallop, "will bring such a troop of freeholders to the poll as will make the duke say the seven penitential Psalms, and oblige the king to put on his considering cap, if his majesty has such a necessary article."

"A fine thought," added the doctor, "to beard the Papistical court in their new resort with a real Protestant champion. They tell me the old city swarms with Jesuits, and they will then scamper like hunted rats."

"Norton for Hampshire and none other!" cried Mill; "and for you, Sir John, to refuse, would be a disgrace to your ancestry."

"But here is my uncle, who has several times served the county, whose grey hairs will command respect, and who has gained a name."

"Idle Dick Norton," replied the old man with a laugh; "and I am ready now to serve it with head, heart, and soul —aye, and to take the field, sword in hand, in the cause of liberty: and to fight against a tyrant, whether he sticks up for prerogative, or squanders the nation's wealth on minions or courtesans; or another who would pin his kingly robe to the petticoats of the old witch clothed in scarlet. A name, nephew? Yes, truly a name, which would injure the cause if brought forward too prominently. Old grievances would be remembered, and timid mortals would make an excuse of them. I am a marked man, but against you nought can be urged. Come, Jack, enter the field, and win your spurs; and then you'll truly be, Sir John."

"Well, uncle, I submit, and agree to stand with Tilney of Rotherwick."

"Agreed, agreed, Norton and Tilney, liberty and pure religion for Hampshire!" shouted the company.

"Winchester," again spoke the chairman, "I fear is hopelessly lost. A resident court in a small town is like an *avalanche*, nought can resist it: besides, our secrets have been revealed by that fellow Ledger, who has bought a knightship at the expense of his honour."

"You are wrong, my lord," interrupted Wallop, "the rascal could never give that which he never had. He never deceived me. I had his measure, and the music of his loud professions was like the thumping of a drum."

"Well, let it pass; and now, Harry, let us know the

result of your embassy to the lord marquis—will he declare himself, and may we count him as one of our friends?"

"You have asked a question," said Wallop, "which I cannot answer. You must judge for yourself when you have heard the strange adventures of your trusted envoys, myself and Mill."

"My life," said Burnett, "has been full of strange adventures."

"Which we have heard you recount morning, noon, and night," replied old Norton, "so we will now hear Wallop."

"On Tuesday last," said Wallop, "Mill and myself, having taken our noontide meal, set off on horseback across the country from Farleigh to Abbotstone, to perform my lord's commission. We took our time, rode leisurely, in friendly chat, and it may have been somewhere about three o'clock when we came within sight of the mansion; but before we could reach it we passed through a gateway, at which was posted a boy, holding a lighted lanthorn in his hand, whilst the sweat ran down his face from the burning sun above. We pulled up, and enquired the meaning of the bumpkin, who grinning answered, 'Please, your honour, 'tis the lord marqu's that set I here, and here I have been ever since sunrise.'—'And what for? said I'—'Oh, because our fellows at harvest-cart should not run against the gate-post, as Will Studley did yesterday in my lord's sight, so he set I to stand here all day because other fellows should not do the like.'"

"You remember, Colonel Norton," interposed the doctor, "Diogenes went out with a lighted candle at noonday;"

"To find an honest man, but you were not then living, doctor," said Norton, with a laugh.

"Well," replied the divine, "the marquis has a precedent."

"Harry, go on," whispered the chairman.

"I inquired for the marquis, when the lord replied that Sam Snuggs said he was a rat-hunting in the barn, and that there were some terrible fine folks along with him, and so we made our way to the barn, and there we saw the premier marquis of England, with his ferrets and a score of dogs, in his shirtsleeves, engaged in the sport. He bade us welcome, told us supper would be ready in another hour, gave directions that our steeds should be properly attended to, but no further desisted from his sport; and holloaing now and then like a Trojan. His lordship, we were informed, did not quit his bed till noon, nothing uncommon; and his companions were

my Lord Cornbury, the Duke of Grafton, and some others of his Majesty's hangers-on, who had come from Winchester to have a day's amusement. His dogs were of all breeds, and their names were such as showed his wild fancy and reckless humour; there was a fine old mastiff which he called "Noll;" a French poodle, "The Duchess;" and a savage bull-dog, "Claverhouse."

"That shows his lordship's wit," said the divine; "that Graham of Claverhouse is the anointed of the Devil."

"A lurcher that he called "Danby;" a little terrier, fierce and active, which he honoured by the name of "Dick Norton."

"Ha, ha, ha," said the old man chuckling, "my lord marquis is complimentary."

"And he said," continued Wallop, "that the tan terrier was the best ratter in the county, and was above all price."

"Better and better—I shall get vain in my old age," again spoke Norton, "the marquis is not the fool he pretends to be; or at all events there is 'method in his madness.'"

"That, also, is my idea, "said the chairman; "but go on with your story, Harry."

"Tired at length with his sport, he bade us take pot-luck with him, and led the way to the great hall, hung round with portraits of his ancestors for generations past; and was particularly courteous to his Winchester friends, assigning them the best places. The viands were plentiful enough; but of a character to turn all but a hungry stomach. The first course was fish and cabbage, and I was obliged to press my fists hard against my sides to prevent a hearty laugh at the wry faces of the courtiers, and Mill bit through his lips like a badger. Next followed fat bacon and hard dumplings, sparrow pies and roasted squirrels and rats; and then, but not till a full half-hour had elapsed, and their patience was well exhausted, some haunches of prime and finely-roasted venison."

"And the liquor to wash down this dainty fare?" inquired the doctor.

"Of the best kind, and enough to float His Highness the Lord Admiral across the Channel, where he must sometime go, never to return."

"Amen!" shouted the company.

"The wine passed freely round, though our host shirked his quantum, he being evidently bent on seeing his friends under the table; but whilst by his broken, hiccuppy voice, and excited manner, he pretended to be the worse for what

he had taken, his steady eye and keen glance told it was all a sham. Pressing were the invitations for his lordship to present himself at court, and how fervent were the declarations of how happy his Majesty would be to receive him; but he parried all that the minions said, and treated them as we have seen *Hamlet* treat Rosencrantz and Guilderstern in the play."

"There is fire beneath all this smoke," said Russell.

"Well, after a sitting of some hours, we adjourned to the saloon, where we had drawing a badger from a tub, and where Dick Norton showed his pluck, though not sufficient strength; to which followed cock-fighting, and throwing of dice, in which our host made his company pay pretty dearly for their reception."

"Harry," said the chairman in a grave voice, "we," putting a peculiar emphasis on the word, "had trusted that you had forsworn the dice-box."

"For my own amusement I have, my lord—but, in the service of my country——"

"England can never be saved by gambling," replied the lord.

"The worthy doctor tells us it is allowable to fight the devil with his own weapons; but on this occasion I and Mill were but spectators, or joined only so much in the sport as to keep the ball moving."

"And what the result?"

"You shall hear in good time, my lord. The sun had risen an hour before Lord Cornbury and his friends left the house, and some of them were hardly able to keep their sitting on their saddles. I then requested a moment's conversation with the marquis; he looked grave, shrugged his shoulders, and then said impatiently, 'I can't afford to be a martyr.'"

"And he said no more?" enquired the chairman anxiously.

"Nought but that he had given up affairs of state, and kept a farm and carters; and went on a rambling talk, interspersed with hard hits on patriots and courtiers, kings and republicans, churchmen and papists; and then offered a heavy bet, that Lincoln's Inn Fields, instead of Smithfield, would be the scene of an English *auto-da-fe*, and that the sun would not run its yearly course before some of England's best blood would there be shed."

"Who gave this mad lord the power of prophecy? though lunacy assumes much," said the divine.

"Straws and feathers show the wind," said Norton.

"This comes close home. I feel I am in the spider's mesh," said the lord with a ghastly smile; and then recovering his composure continued, "in my country's cause I am prepared for the worst, whether in the field or on the scaffold;—but let us hear more of our Cassandra."

"I again ventured to call his lordship's attention to the necessity of a decided movement, being threatened with Popery and slavery, but was again interrupted by a fierce cry, 'I can't afford to be a martyr;' so, considering further expostulation useless, bade him good-night, and retired to my chamber, into which the uprisen sun poured his bright rays; but the strange scenes I had witnessed overcame me, and I fell asleep, from which I was awakened by the war-sound of a trumpet—that peculiar blast known as 'Rupert's Call.' I hastened to the window, and saw in the courtyard a score or more of horsemen, arrayed as the cuirassiers of the late king. I was wondering what wild frolic was now in hand, when his lordship, also dressed as a cavalier, entered my chamber, and invited me to accompany him to Winchester. I assented, and joined the party, but soon found myself in strange company. We started on our eight miles' journey through a succession of villages; first a couple of trumpeters sounding at every turn the Rupert call; then a double-grown fellow on an elephantine horse, bearing my lord's banner, the three swords meeting at an apex, and his well-known motto emblazoned in large gilt letters, *Aymez Loyaulte*; then followed the fierce cuirassiers with drawn swords, pistols in their holsters, and their polished morions glistening in the sun; then rode the lord marquis on a war-horse richly caparisoned, and by his side Harry Wallop—the son and grandson of noted Parliamentarians—who felt himself almost a prisoner; and then followed forty or fifty of my lord's tenants all well-mounted, and all dressed in the royalist fashion of the late reign. At our approach to any collection of houses, the trumpets sent forth their war blasts, and drew to the doors gaping bumpkins hollooing children, and barking dogs. I would gladly have given seven fat bucks and a pipe of canary to be rid of my company. When we reached the old city there was such a clattering of bells, as if all the parsons, churchwardens, people, churches, and steeples, had gone mad. Well, through the streets we went, the trumpets sounding, and the people, who crowded the way, some shouting and others laughing;

with the gravity of a judge, bowing on one side and then on the other, rode the marquis; whilst I, with a flushed face, could scarce raise my eyes from the ground. At length we reached our destination, a huge ugly pile called St. John's House. There were we received by the mayor and his brethren, in the scarlet robes. That arch-fiend, Ledger, that crept into my Lord Russell's confidence on the strength of his strong professions, though I, plain rough Harry Wallop, guessed, aye, was certain, he was as slippery as an eel, and as wily as a thrice-hunted fox. There the traitor stood, with his golden chain about his neck, and ill-begotten knighthood, with all the confidence of the Old One. Humph! how I should have liked to have kicked the rascal, and to have pummelled the smirks and smiles out of his false countenance. But, enough, why should I be angry, when my lord marquis could play the hypocrite—congratulate the traitor on his newly-conferred honour, and speak most graciously to him; though I could catch a grumbling sound in his throat, and mark a vicious glance in his eye. Humph! such are the world's ways; and now for a bit of sunshine. Among the aldermen there was one old fellow, with his bald pate and silvery locks, who was capering with joy, shouting with his broken voice, '*Aymez Loyaulté*—love loyalty! huzza for the Marquis—a Pawlett, a Pawlett—ho! Cavaliers! Down with the Roundheads!' and other ancient war cries. The old boy got hoarse, but still he cried, 'Down with the Roundheads.' The marquis spoke and shook hands with the jolly dog, who then began again, 'A Pawlett, aye, every inch a Pawlett—down with Roundheads! To the rescue, to the rescue, Cavaliers, to the rescue!'"

"And who was this mad royalist?" inquired the elder Norton.

"His name, they told me, was Foreright."

"Ha!" said the old soldier, throwing himself back in his chair to consider, "and then I know the man, or rather, did forty years ago."

"Your memory serves you well, colonel," said the chairman, "some ancient comrade?"

"No, he was on the other side; and if half the cavaliers had shown his pluck, Marston Moor, or Naseby, had never been ours."

"A royalist captain?" said Mill.

"Not that—a mere citizen, whom I sentenced to be

hanged after the Cheriton fight for exciting his fellow-citizens to resist the orders of Parliament. As an example, he was to be executed over the principal gateway of the city; but I had not the heart to see it done, for though pinioned, and death staring him in the face, he flinched not, but shouted, 'God bless the King, and down with the Roundheads.' I love a brave fellow, friend or foe; I would not hang a game dog; I drew my sword, and with my own hands, cut the cord by which he was fettered, and bid him go home; but even then, looking me boldly in the face, he exclaimed, 'God save the King!'"

"The same man, I doubt not," replied Wallop. "He was mightily pleased, and holding the marquis by the hand, called him his father's boy, and a Pawlett to the backbone. His lordship could hardly release himself from the old fellow's grasp, and not before a tear had started from his eye."

"And what was the purport of your visit?" inquired the doctor.

"If your reverence were to guess from now till St. Michael sounds his tattoo, you would be wide of the mark, with all your deep learning; and yet I found it was no more than this:—The marquis derives from the city the sum of one hundred marks annually, known as his creation fee; and went to receive it in person, and in return, gave a sumptuous entertainment to the Corporation and other citizens, male and female."

"And how did he conduct himself?" said Russell.

"Humph! I could as well tell the colours of the rainbow, and quite as transient. One moment he had all the formality of the olden time, and the next the frivolity of the present; now he had the airyness of a Frenchman, and the manners of a courtier, and anon those of a boor. Sometimes he gave way to boisterous mirth, and then was subdued by a sudden melancholy. Before he took his seat, he insisted on saluting the ladies round, and he allowed no exception—old and young, pretty and ugly, were obliged to submit to the ordeal."

"The fellow puts the Great Turk into the shade," cried the doctor, "in Scotland he would suffer penance for such gross immorality."

"No sin in kissing a pretty wench, doctor, though there were some lips I would not care to have touched," replied Wallop; "the women took it in good part, and hearty shouts and laughter followed each successive smack. At the dinner

Ledger was on his right hand, to whom he behaved most courteously, and chatted as with a bosom friend. In rising to propose his health, he spoke of him as an honour to the country, and one who was destined to conduct her councils—for in him was blended the wisdom of a Solomon, with the integrity of an Aristides; he was a man incapable of doing a bad act, or of even entertaining a bad thought, his object being the common weal, and not any personal gain or honour; and on he went, pouring forth the most inflated flattery, interspersed with telling home-thrusts, which made the wretch wince for the moment. But it was but for a moment, for he was so blinded with pride, and wrapped up in his own conceit, as to believe all the marquis's gross lies. After a sitting of some hours, during which the wine had rapidly disappeared, the greater part of the company left, when up rose my lord, and in a hiccuppy voice proposed that we should close the evening with a game of blind man's buff."

"Holla! what next," shouted the elder Norton, "do they do such things in Scotland, doctor?"

"Truly, at the manse, and cotters; but such a thing at a guild would be noticed by the Kirk."

"Old Mother Church plays antics enough here," replied Norton, "but she is either too proud or wise to take notice of blind man's buff, whether played in a public hall or a private house; but, Wallop, on with the game."

"The mayor demurred, but the marquis insisted, and would not be refused, and ordered the bandages to be placed before his own eyes, and the sport began, and for ten minutes received friendly taps on the back. My turn came next, and it was arranged that Ledger, who, instead of joining us, stalked about the room, should be betrayed into my grasp; and I had had my turn of groping and snatching; at length found that I had captured no less a person than Sir Pharaoh Ledger. We now called upon him to be blinded, and he refused, declaring it would be a degradation to his office, but my lord would hear no excuse. The fellow begged and prayed to be released, and then partly by coaxing and partly by force, the bandage was applied to his eyes, and so fastened that he could not remove it. I gave him a twirl round, and then from some other hand he received a blow on the back which sent him sprawling on the ground; and then there was a derisive cry, 'Rise, Sir Pharaoh, and Sir Knight!' he had no sooner regained his legs than came another blow, and then a shove

which sent him reeling across the room, and then back again with equal force, to which succeeded repeated buffets, so that he cried for mercy, which few seemed willing to grant. As my lord's people had left the room, his worship's tormentors were his fellow-citizens, and their treatment showed their love. 'Come away,' said the marquis, 'it is not fitting that we interfere in any difference between a king and his subjects,' and we left the room, hearing as we descended the stairs, the supplications of one party, and the shouts of the other."

"By the red nose of old Noll," shouted Norton, "that was not fair play, twenty on one, and he blinded; why, they had better tossed him in a blanket."

"I do not justify the treatment, though I do not think the knave had more than he deserved—I merely tell what happened," replied Wallop. "On our way home, I had an opportunity of holding a long discourse with my lord, who was rational enough till I put the question what do you intend to do? and then came the old answer, 'I can't afford to be a martyr,' followed by a calculation of the impoverishment of his estate through his father's devoted loyalty in the late civil war, the desirability of keeping the head joined to the shoulders, the high prices paid to informers and false swearers, and fearful denunciations against Ledger. A plain answer to my question I could not get, but I am assured he means us well, though he lacks the moral courage to show it, and that the court will find him to be more knave than fool."

"Sorry assistance in the day of need," said the chairman despondently; "and, by the news-letter which I received this morning, I find that Sir Henry Tichbourn, whom we had so long in the Tower, has been appointed Ranger of the New Forest; and that Wells, of Brambridge, another papist, has been nominated as sheriff of the county."

"Cheer up, cheer up, my lord," cried Burnett: "I will more than make up for the loss of the marquis, and revenge those papistical appointments."

All stared, and old Norton shook his head, and laughed incredulously.

"But I wool, colonel, or my name be not Gilbert Burnett, nor I don't know Aberdeen. Faith, there are other ways of winning a victory, besides fighting with swords—mere carnal weapons."

"And now your plan, doctor?"

"I will make a journey through the county, and preach in

every pulpit, to which I can gain admittance, against Popery and temporizers; and tell the people whom they should choose as their Parliament men."

"But you have not and will not be able to get the bishop's licence. Old Morley is too wrapped up in the divine right of kings, to do anything which would offend his sovereign," said Russell.

"And do I want it? Let his lordship forbid it at his peril. He will best serve us by forbidding me, better than all my preaching, for every one will then believe it was the work of the Duke and Jesuits, and the tale will spread like wildfire."

"But we must not seek to mend the law by breaking the law," said the chairman.

"In a righteous cause all things are justifiable," replied the divine.

"To that I will never subscribe," said the chairman. "Whether we succeed or fail, let it be with honour. I have a presentiment that before we have better days we must have worse. No matter—no matter—they say that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church; but, in a nation's cause, the blood of martyrs is the seed of freedom."

CHAPTER XVII.

A JOURNEY TO PORTSMOUTH.

"Moon of Harvest, herald mild,
Of plenty, rustic labour's child,
Hail! oh hail! I greet thy beam,
As soft it trembles o'er the stream;
And gilds the straw-thatch'd hamlet wide,
Where innocence and peace reside;
'Tis thou that glad'st with joy the rustic throng,
Prompst the tripping dance, the exhilarating song."

KIRKE WHITE.

THE *Buff and Blue* conclave had not brought their deliberations to a close, when a serving-man entered the room and announced that a messenger had arrived in hot haste from Portsmouth, bearing with him a packet addressed to "Colonel Norton;" and that it was of such high matter, that he was to deliver it into no other hands.

"And I will speedily relieve him of his charge," said the colonel, who arose and left the room.

Within five minutes he returned, with a thoughtful brow and closed lips, as if in anger, with an open letter in his left hand; and, instead of resuming his seat, stood at the table, with his right hand resting upon it, as he spoke:

"My lord, I must away to-night, and that without loss of time, for to-morrow at noon I am required to be in the town-hall of Portsmouth, arrayed in my red gown as an alderman."

"Uncle," said Sir John, "you propose more than you can well do. Consider the distance, the time of day, and your own age."

"Nor do you know, nephew, and I fear would not fully appreciate, the stake at issue. If I have lost some of the activity of youth, I lack none of its fire; and, if the sun will soon be gone, we shall have the harvest moon at its full; and for the distance, 'tis scarce a score of miles, as the crow flies, across country to Southwick Place, every inch of which I know, either as a soldier, or as a sportsman: and then the remainder will be but a pleasant morning's trot."

"But why such haste?" asked Lord Russell; "touches it the public weal, or merely the good town of Portsmouth."

"Both, my lord, and that on vital points, as I will satisfy you. Treason is on foot in our hitherto stronghold. As yet, we, the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses, have been amused rather than otherwise, with the frowns of royalty; and have successfully defied might and illegal authority; but now it seems we shall be called upon to counteract craft and bribery."

"A Jesuit's plot, I'll warrant ye," exclaimed Burnett.

"That seems likely, doctor; for the Duke who, as Lord High Admiral, has the control of the dockyard, figures as the principal actor in the play. Now, know ye all, that the right to elect Parliament men for the borough of Portsmouth is in the Corporation. At present, we consist of fifteen, of whom, we could always count on nine, if not ten, as good men and true. Our charter makes mention of twelve aldermen, and an indefinite number of burgesses; but to make the body more compact and sure, it has been deemed policy not to have the full complement of aldermen, and as few burgesses as possible; and because they should not be subject to local pressure, to select non-residents, a doctrine to which I have never assented; as it is easier to intimidate three or four, and thus turn the scale, than a dozen or a score; besides, by such means, we are imitating what we mostly reprobate in our opponents, in seeking for arbitrary power, and that has rendered us in some degree unpopular in the town; and certain inhabitants, stirred up by the duke's emissaries, have moved the court of King's Bench to issue a *mandamus* that we immediately fill up the bench of aldermen, and elect twenty-four additional burgesses, and all to be resident householders of the town. My informant now tells me that the *mandamus* has been granted, and is now in the hands of the townclerk, and that it has been accompanied by an offer from high quarters, that if the corporation will surrender their present charter, his majesty will be graciously pleased to confer on the town another charter, giving extended jurisdiction and power to the corporation, by uniting the Vill of Gosport to the borough, and the right of a free passage and to maintain boats both to Gosport and the Isle of Wight, provided that his majesty should have power to nominate a portion of the aldermen and burgesses."

"Ho, ho, ho," again exclaimed Burnett, "and why not at once say, admit so many wolves into the sheepfold?"

"We fully understand the full intent of this most gracious offer," said the lord; "destroy municipal independence, and

stifle the voices of sturdy burgesses, and then arbitrary power and Popery will reign triumphant throughout the land; or we must again try the issue in the battle-field. But say you, Norton, that there is any danger of your present majority being turned into a minority?"

"I cannot say that the scale is yet turned; but our number is reduced; the mayor has gone clean over, and with him the townclerk: the former has been appointed cooper to the Navy, and there is his price; the other sees in the new charter a large increase of fees, and, lawyer-like, has few scruples of conscience; aye, and as my warning friend tells me, the townclerk may be seen at all hours of the day, at the corners of the streets, discoursing on the great boon the new charter would be to the inhabitants."

"As long as they will forget their duties as Englishmen," said Russell, "and meanly surrender what their ancestors bravely won, and be the willing slaves of harlot rule, and bigoted infatuation."

"Aye," added Burnett, "and like good children open their mouths and shut their eyes, and wait patiently for what next may come."

"Thus stand matters at present," continued Norton; "and now for the future—the mayor, like a renegade that will submit to any indignity, and swallow water however foul, has convened a meeting of the corporation at such a short notice, that it will be impossible for several of the body to attend, even if they hear of it; and thus enable him and his new allies to carry their point; but I will be there in spite of them, if Black Bet will be as true on her feet, and as fleet in her pace, as hitherto she has been;" and, turning to the Farleigh squire, "Come, Wallop, you shall ride with me, for an adventure is your heart's delight. What welcome you may find at Southwick I will not promise, but leave you to guess, but at Portsmouth you will find men as devoted to English liberty and pure religion as yourself; and, should we be strong enough, I will nominate you as one of our aldermen, and thus connect the ancient Hampshire family of Wallop with the good town of Portsmouth."

"A tempting bait," said Wallop with a smile, "but what can you urge in my behalf?"

"Not merely that you are a member of a family of long standing in the county, and whose father and grandfather rendered good service in the cause of freedom, but what will

surely tickle the fancies of Portsmouth folk, a family of naval reputation."

"Indeed," said Wallop.

"Aye indeed, young man, for did not your ancestor, Sir John Wallop, as Admiral of the Fleet, in the reign of Henry VIII. sail from Portsmouth harbour with twelve ships for the coast of Brittany, where he landed and destroyed twenty towns and villages, to say nothing of the vessels which he captured; and did he not afterwards sail for the coast of Normandy, and take the strong town of Morlaix, besides other great services?"

"The colonel has made out a case," said Russell, "and I think, Harry, he has a right to your services."

"And he shall have them with a willing heart, and I hope to prove myself a trusty squire to such a valiant knight, and thereby win my spurs. But when leave you, colonel?"

"Without loss of time; my knave is gone forward, and will, by the time we start, be half-way to Alresford, where we will rest and refresh, and then, by the light of the moon, we will canter over the downs to Southwick, where, Wallop, you shall have venison as juicy, and wine as sparkling, as ever an old prior set before an honoured guest."

"And that we may know without loss of time, the result of to-morrow, for we cannot expect to see Wallop for a week to come," said Lord Russell, "my new secretary, Michael Flamborough, whom the worthy doctor pressed into my service shall go with you, and bring back whatever token you may please to send us."

The town of Alresford, although now more than twice the size it was then, was at the period of our tale a place of importance, which could boast of its municipal corporation, its weekly market, and its clothing trade. As there was but little communication with towns at a distance, the inhabitants of the surrounding country were entirely dependent upon Alresford for their requirements, and thither resorted the village tailor, shoemaker, and blacksmith, for their cloth, leather, and iron; whilst the farmer's wife having disposed of her poultry, bútter, and other provisions in the market, expended the money she had received in the shops of the town.

All the houses were then covered with thatch, and none of them rose above the second floor. The road to Alton and London, instead as at present running through Sutton, crossed

the Weir to Old Alresford, and then proceeded through Bighton; whilst what is now called East-street, was little better than a green lane. The corporation consisted of a bailiff and eight burgesses, the former of whom exercised a legal jurisdiction within the borough, and held a law-day court every three weeks, for the trial of inferior actions of debt, trespasses, and other matters; whilst these "grave and reverend seignors" held their meetings in a room above where the market was held, a building which stood in the middle of Broad-street, and which was destroyed by fire in 1689.

The principal house for entertainment for man and horse was the Swan Inn, the approach to which was by a large gateway which led into a spacious yard and ample stabling. On either side of the gateway, there was a room of considerable dimensions, but more than eight feet in height. The one on the right hand served for a kitchen, and for the reception of inferior guests; whilst that on the left hand was devoted to the use of lords and ladies, justices of the peace, and Parliament men, when they honoured Alresford by passing through it; and it was also the place in which the county magistrates held their petty sessions once in every month. The floor of the kitchen was of brick, but that of the parlour was of oak, and that so highly polished that it was a puzzle to many to keep their footing, and the only covering to any portion of it was a kind of hearthrug of deerskins sewed together. In the centre of the room was a large walnut-tree table, for mahogany was unknown, supported by numerous legs, in which much labour had been spent in their adornment. On each side of the fire-place, there was an elbow chair, cushioned, and covered with deer skins, whilst the other chairs, which were high-backed, according to the fashion of the day, displayed elaborate carving, and to correspond there were two antique side-boards; whilst the walls displayed the antlers of deer, and foxes' and badgers' heads, and also ornamented with the spoils from the battle-field of Cheriton, such as swords, spears, and morions, or steel caps.

The principal feature of the kitchen was its enormous fire-place, and now, before the cheerful blaze, stood the hostess, Molly Skinner, as idle folks would call her, tending to the roasting of some wild-fowl which she had provided for her expected guest. On three sides of the room there were seats affixed to the walls, and in front of them there were a number

of tables all at a distance from each other, so that however miscellaneous the company might have been, the different parties were not obliged to come in contact with each other, and enabled every group to keep their conversation to themselves. Thus, at one table there was the curate. Parson Manley, in his gown and bands, smoking his pipe, and in quiet chat with Master Knapp, the leading tanner and bailiff of the borough. They were awaiting the arrival of the Winchester carrier, and his budget of news, which they would afterwards retail through the town. At another table there was a farmer from Titchbourn, with whom an Alresford shopkeeper was driving a bargain for a couple of hogs, and the only question was whether their joint weight would be twenty-three or twenty-four score. At another table there was a wayfaring man, who had called in on his journey, and was feasting on bread and cheese with an evident relish: whilst at another table there were a couple of rustics playing at the now obsolete game of **fox and geese, for mugs of ale.**

"And where is Tom to-night?" spoke the bailiff, addressing himself to the hostess, "he is generally in the way of an evening, either waiting upon his customers, or helping them **to empt their mugs.**"

"He is where he ought to be, bailiff," was the reply, "in the cellar, in hunt for the best wine we have in store for our old master, Colonel Norton, who is coming here to supper on his way home; and he has with him, so Frank Bunce his serving man tells me, Squire Wallop, the great hunting gentleman, whom folks say, has as many horses as weeks, and as many dogs as days in the year—but I won't have it."

"And you have got something flavoury for the Colonel's supper," said the curate.

"And so I ought; for neither Tom Skinner or Molly Skinner be folks to forget a kindness, and but for the Colonel they would not be keeping the Swan at Alresford, which you know, master bailiff, be as good an inn as can be found between Hampton and London."

"And what birds are those which you are roasting?" asked the parson.

"Lord bless your reverence," said the hostess with a stare, "I do wonder for a man of your great learning not to know—they be common enough, and you must have seen them hundreds of times on the sides and in the water of our big pond. But I forget, you be'ant Hampshire bred, and havn't long

been here. They be moor-hens and dapper-chicks, which I do know the colonel do dearly love, for I was his cook when he lived at Old Alresford manor-house, for many a year; nor does he forget us, for he never comes this way but he calls here to see his old servants, Tom and Molly Skinner; and, in leaving, there is sure to be something for the little ones, as he calls them, though they be most of them as big as he."

"Aye, I remember me," said the bailiff, "Tom was a long time in his service, quite his handy man. Tom and I were boys together, but he was a desperate one, and we used to call him Furze-bush."

"And you know how he got that name, I suppose? Before our great battle the king's men held our town, and because all the Alresford folk were for the other party, the soldiers and the townsmen could not well hit it: and the boys were as bad as the men, and the worst of the bunch was our Tom, who was always mocking the soldiers, and at last they took him, and locked him up in the cage; but Tom managed to get out, and in fear of his life ran off to the place where the battle was afterwards; and, because he should not be taken, hid himself under a furze-bush, and there bided for three days, when Colonel Norton and his men came up, and then there was the great fight; and, as you must remember, bailiff, the king's men were driven into the town and then out of the town."

"I do," replied the bailiff, "for the royalists before they left Alresford in their retreat set fire to my father's house, for he was a strong Parliament man."

"But you, bailiff," said the parson, "are a loyal subject, and a warm supporter of your church and king."

"That I am a loyal subject is most true," replied the other, "and I duly attend my church, and pay its calls without complaining, as every father of a family, or one well-to-do in the world, and one bearing authority, ought to do. But there are many things I should like to see mended, both in church and state—thus, I should be glad to see you wear a better gown, be able to keep a better table, and lodge in a better house."

Just at this time there was heard the sound of horsemen riding up the street, and presently under the gate-way of the inn, the loud voice of Colonel Norton—

"Ho, Tom Skinner! Ho, Furze-bush! where are you all lagging?" but before he had time to finish what he had a

mind to say, Tom was at his horse's head, with his hand on the bridle, and Molly at his side, making her obedience to her old master.

"All right, Tom, look to the steeds, for we must be off again within an hour; and you, Molly Dance, that was, look as fat and as happy as ever," said the old man in dismounting, and then, followed by Wallop, led the way into the parlour, seated himself in the chair from which, in former years, he had frequently dispensed justice. Within a short time our host returned for the purpose of receiving the colonel's commands.

"Supper as soon as you can, and whilst Molly is dishing up, and I am sure the women-bodies do not want the help of men-folk at that work, you come in and tell me the news of the place—who is dead, married, or gone away; for the time was, Tom, when I knew everybody here."

"Aye, and they all knew you, colonel, as a good neighbour, and a kind-hearted justice."

"Pshaw, pshaw! tell Molly to let us have supper, for our time is short."

Tom executed the colonel's bidding, and then returned, and seating himself at a respectful distance from his guest, retailed his budget of news, and answered such questions as were asked him. In the meantime the evening repast smoked upon the table, served up in pewter dishes, and principally consisted of wildfowl, of which we before spoke, an eel pudding, and an enormous gammon of home-fatted and home-killed bacon.

"Our hostess," said Wallop, "is willing that we shall not starve, or have occasion to give her house a bad name."

"She knew that a sportsman was coming," replied Norton, "and they, proverbially, have good appetites; besides, Wallop, you pride yourself in being a descendant of that gormandizing race, the Saxons; but even then we are not equal to this ample fare, and as our time must be short, we like travellers should make our quarters good, Tom shall invite the bailiff of the town and the curate, whom he tells me are smoking their pipes in the kitchen, to join us. Mind you, Tom, tell his reverence we wish him to say grace; and we shall not expect him to go out with the cheese, but to stay till we are gone, and then as long afterwards as he and the bailiff pleases, and that without stint of wine."

The invitation was thankfully accepted, and the four sat down to supper, and none of them appeared dissatisfied with Mistress Skinner's culinary skill; whilst Tom obtained due

credit for his selection of wine. The bailiff was not unknown to the colonel as he was one of his warm supporters when he contested the county; but the curate was a stranger, and had been but a few years in Alresford. The conversation soon took a political turn, but the combatants were unequally matched, being three to one; but the curate took it in good part, and sustained the banter to which he was subjected with a smiling countenance and a light heart. The effect had been to detain the travellers longer than they intended, but at length they were again on horseback; and, on their journey followed by their now three attendants.

The harvest moon had arisen some time, and diffused her silvery light around, as on they jogged in pleasant chat through the wooded lanes to the village of Cheriton. More than once the colonel pulled up, for the purpose of explaining to his companion some of the particulars of the famed Cheriton fight in which he took part full forty years before.

"Mark that knoll," said he, "with the wood behind, there it was my Lord Hopton planted his drakes, or field-pieces, which made such havoc among the Londoners; and there to the left, was where the royal horse made a desperate charge and forced ours to retreat, and who would have been cut to pieces but for the assistance rendered them by a body of musketeers;" and then, pointing to a dell with the ground rising sharply on both sides, "There was the real fight of the day. The Royalists were posted on one ridge and our men at the other, and they stood gazing at each other, and both waiting for their chances like a couple of cats; but you know, Wallop, our patience-wallet was always better furnished then theirs, and so it then proved to be, for after a time they advanced, quitting their vantage ground, and descending the hill, shouting 'God be with us!' to which our men replied, 'Glory be to God!' but without moving forward, until they crossed the dell, and were ascending the hill, and then they stept forward and descended the hill to meet them, a fearful carnage ensued, and the issue was doubtful, when through yon gap, beside an old ash and mighty oak, I, with my two-score Hambledon boys, made our appearance; we were all as fresh as a daisy though we had ridden a dozen miles that morning to have a finger in the pie, and so we had. Our appearance, and the fear that there were more to follow, staggered our opponents, and they commenced their retreat to Alresford and the day was ours. There, even there, and I believe it is the self-same tree," pointing to an

oak, "fell my Lord Stuart, not of more noble blood than of valour and good conduct; and, in that hollow, Colonel Sandys of Mottisfont, the kinsman of your friend Sir John; and hereabout were Sir Ralph Stawell and Sir Henry Beard made prisoners, all of them being on the king's side."

Further explanations would probably have followed had not the attention of our travellers been diverted by the sounds of rustic revelry, which they both recognized as proclaiming a happy consummation—the end of harvest. They stayed for a time to listen to the melody of voices, and then pushed forward for the purpose of seeing who the parties might be, and a nearer approach to the village brought to view a procession descending—what would have been a dark lane, but that "the moon play'd the branches among." First marched honest George Godwin, the biggest farmer in Cheriton, both as regarded bodily size and extent of land; in whose behalf the whole village had turned out to give a finish to the work, and afterwards to partake of his hospitality. Next came Jim Chick, the parish clerk, playing on a flageolet; and then the young folks of the village, each lad arm in arm with his lass, and singing "Harvest Home," to which the elders of the place, who now followed, joined in chorus. Then came three wains loaded with barley, with the horses and drivers profusely decorated with green branches; and lastly the old women and young children, with the bundles of corn which they had gathered by gleaning, and amusing themselves by shouting as they passed along. In front of the then humble parsonage stood the rector, and his youngest child in his arms, with all his other children around him, and who had been allowed to stay up till this late hour to enjoy a promised treat. As Farmer Godwin passed his house, the worthy parson raised his hat from his head, waved it, and continued to do so till the last of the party had gone along, as a token of congratulation—an example which was followed by his children who waved their tiny hands, and which was responded to by loud and hearty huzzas.

Leaving the village and the happy harvesters, Norton and Wallop were soon in the open country and crossing spacious downs. By putting spurs to their horses they soon left their attendants far behind, when the former enquired of the latter, who that strange fellow was whom Lord Russell had described as his secretary, and sent with them to Portsmouth?

Wallop laughed as he replied, "I believe his lordship is

indebted to that canny Scotchman, who is at once his chaplain and political guide. They have recently been into the west country, and at Tavistock had the pleasure of hearing this Michael Flamborough in the market place, who it seems was an itinerant preacher, delivering sundry high-spiced addresses against the pope, duke, and the devil knows who. This captivated the doctor, and upon the strength of his lungs, and glibness of his tongue, warmly recommended him to my lord, who thereupon engaged him."

"And that is what I never would have done," replied Norton; "The fellow is a knave, aye, and a rank one. Mark his eyes, they have ever a downward tendency, that I warrant ye, that if a swarm of flies were to settle on his nose, he could tell you whether there were three-score, or five dozen and one."

Our party at length arrived at the village of Droxford, and descending the course of the stream, reached Soberton, and soon afterwards entered the Forest of Bere, of which Colonel Norton was one of the rangers; and in a short time reached the point of their destination.

Southwick Priory, or as it was then called, "Southwick Place," the residence of Colonel Norton, was a spacious mansion with few pretensions to beauty, nor in its pristine state was the old priory celebrated for the elegance of its architecture; and the alterations which had been made in converting it from monastic to domestic purposes, had been effected without the least taste; and the only portion of the old building which remained in its integrity was the chapel, lighted with seven lancet windows on each side, and in which, in 1452, King Henry VI. was married to Margaret of Anjou.

At the period of our tale, Colonel Norton was a widower, and was the sole occupier of the mansion. When he reached home, his servants had gone to bed; but "the watch dog's honest bark" aroused them from their slumbers, and in a short space of time some of them were about, and admitted their master and his friend, whom he informed them would be his guest for some days.

In a small room, once the prior's parlour, they enjoyed the cheerful blaze after a long ride. Above the fireplace there was a portrait of a churchman of the Augustan order, which rivetted the attention of Wallop, who afterwards looked at his friend, and then seemed to compare the features of the fat monk, with those of the weather-beaten soldier.

"Ha, ha, ha,! you are puzzled, Sir Sportsman," said the latter.

"I am," replied Wallop; "and yet methinks that the reverend father must have been some relative of yours."

"You're right; for that devout old gentleman was my grandfather's brother—William Norton, the last prior of Southwick, and although the painter has given him such a stern countenance, he was a very conformable gentleman: for he not only consented, but induced all his monks to consent, to the surrender of their priory and lands, and that with such a good grace, as to obtain from bluff King Harry an annual pension of two hundred marks. Some years afterwards, he successfully negociated a marriage between his nephew, my father, and the daughter and heiress of John Whyte, the first lay proprietor of this house and broad lands, to which I succeeded, under my maternal grandfather's will."

At an early hour the following morning, the friends were again on horseback on their route to Portsmouth, and ascended the northern slope of Portsdown, to enjoy the prospect from its summit, which for extent and variety had then, as now, few superiors. To the south there was the wide expanse of the British Channel: the level beach, and the abruptly rising shore of Ryde, then a mere fishing village; and the Isle of Wight nearly to its full length, and nearer at hand was to be seen the fine old church and moated walls of Portsmouth. On the east, Chichester's graceful spire rising above the level wolds of Sussex, then the flat lands of Thorney and Hayling Islands, and the pretty hamlets of Havant and Emsworth. Far to the west were to be seen the dark blue tints of the New Forest, as the eye glanced over the Southampton estuary, and close under the hill the old Roman Castle of Portchester, of which Norton was the hereditary constable; and then Portsmouth Harbour,

"Where laughing at the storm rich navies ride."

Descending the hill to the south, our travellers found themselves at Cosham, and then, at the short distance of four miles, they were at the principal gateway of the strongly-fortified town of Portsmouth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OLD AND NEW CHARTER.

"What constitutes a state?

* * * * * * * *

Men, high-minded men, as much above dull brutes indued,
As they exceed cold rocks and brambles rude;
Men, who know their rights,—and knowing, dare maintain."

SIR W. JONES.

THE town of Portsmouth, with Portsea, Southsea, and Landport, has a population but little short of one hundred thousand souls, and yet only one hundred and eighty years ago, it did not exceed three thousand. The population at that time was entirely resident in what is known as Portsmouth proper, in which, as may be readily conceived, there were many open spaces. Thus, what is now known as Point, with its military establishments, and houses closely packed together, was a shingly beach or waste, on which two or three wretched cottages covered with thatch had been erected; whilst the space now occupied by St. Mary's Church and Colewert Barracks, was an airing ground for soldiers, and a play-place for the boys of the town; and that, once the site of the ancient Hospital of St. Nicholas, or God's House, and now occupied as the Grand Parade, Garrison Chapel, and Governor's Green, was then the residence and grounds of the military governor of the town—at that time Colonel Kirke, of Tangier, and afterwards of Sedgemoor, notoriety. Beyond the walls, the dockyard was not one quarter of its present size; the gun-wharf was not then in existence, and the whole of the town of Portsea was an open space, barely covered with stunted grass and furze, and known as Portsmouth Common, a name which it retained till towards the close of the last century.

The ground now occupied by the handsome crescents, the pleasant villas, the terraces, and the numerous streets of Southsea, was another wide extent of waste, part resembling Portsmouth Common, with stinking morasses in several places, and the remainder a shingly beach; and what is now the large and thickly-populated district known as Landport, then

were enclosed fields and hedges, but with no houses except a few in the immediate neighbourhood of Kingston church.

The places of Divine worship were two in number; the old parish church, erected at the commencement of the thirteenth century by Bishop de Rupibus, and a chapel or conventicle in Penny-street for Non-conformists, which was served by the Reverend Benjamin Burgess, formerly vicar of Portsmouth, and who was one of the two thousand ejected ministers who suffered for conscience sake in 1662.

The town had received a charter of incorporation as far back as the reign of Richard I., and was now governed under the one granted by Charles I. By a liberal interpretation of its words, the corporation should have consisted of a mayor, twelve aldermen, and numerous burgesses, in whom were to be vested, not only the civil government of the town, but the election of members of Parliament It had so happened that two sturdy Puritans had managed to obtain the control of the body corporate, and to retain their own influence, and to prevent any chance of the court party obtaining power, would admit as few as possible into the body. One of these two was Abraham Pike, a native of the same town (Bridgewater), and who for years served under our famed Robert Blake, and like him was a republican in politics, and as independent in religion; and the other was Simon Spicer, who in the Civil war was a sergeant in Colonel Norton's troop of horse, known in the neighbourhood as the "Hambledon Boys." For years this couple had been successful in their tactics, as was shown by the votes of the members for Portsmouth which were always recorded in favour of the Whig or Country party.

The most redeeming point in the character of that unfortunate monarch, James II., was the energy and business-like qualities he displayed in the important office of Lord High Admiral, which he filled towards the close of the reign of his brother. The Royal Navy and dockyards had been sadly neglected by his predecessors, and to their improvement he set about with zeal, talent, and perseverance. New ships were built, and both old and new were better manned, whilst more skillful artizans were employed in the dockyards. At Portsmouth where he considered he ought to have considerable influence, he found the local authorities opposed to him; and would gladly have deposed him, not that they questioned his abilities, but that he was an avowed Papist, and for arbitrary authority. To rescue the town from the grasp of his deadly opponents

was a task he resolved upon, and he had but few scruples as to how it was to be done.

Bribery was more likely to be effectual than attempted intimidation. The artizans of the dockyard were taught to believe that they were indebted to his highness for their appointments, and they could best serve their own interests by seeking to promote his views. The inhabitants of the town were told that the retention of so many workmen in the yard, depended entirely on the duke's pleasure, and if offended he would give his favours either to Deptford or Plymouth. A regiment famed for its loyalty was quartered in the town, and the officers, amongst whom was the duke's son, Captain Fitzjames, and who had been requested to be on the most friendly terms with the civilians, and even to cultivate their acquaintance; and they were, as occasion served, to point out that they, the townsmen, were unjustly excluded by an oligarchic few from their just share in the government of the place. The mayor, who at all times was but half-trusted by his party, and who had been elected to his office as a sop to keep him straight, was appointed cooper to the navy, upon which he threw off all disguise, and avowed himself an admirer of the duke. The townclerk received a fee, and was engaged to purchase land for the enlargement of the dockyard, and was promised an appointment for his son; and he forthwith trimmed his boat, and sought to bring the body, of which he was the servant, into disrepute; and, with a third party, bribery was equally successful.

Still, the court party in the corporation were in a minority of six against nine, but as four of the latter were not residents of the town, it was possible to hold a meeting in their absence and to do something which they could not afterwards undo; and the application for a new charter for the government of the town was agreed upon.

It was during the king's sojourn at Winchester that a memorial purporting to have been signed by divers inhabitants of Portsmouth, but not of the corporation, was presented to his majesty by his royal brother, praying that a new charter might be granted to the town, and alledging that many of the corporation were men opposed to his majesty's person, family, and government, and that the inhabitants were in general excluded from the privileges of the existing charter. Another charter was prepared and signed, which was to come into operation on the due surrender of the old one.

The new charter nominally conferred greater privileges on the corporation and the inhabitants than the old one, but in reality it was making the town entirely dependent on the Crown, and declared that the king, if he should think fit, could remove the mayor, or any of the aldermen, and then nominated the then mayor again to his office, and the Duke of York and many of the petitioners as burgesses.

This was duly forwarded to the townclerk, who, retaining the document in his own hands, artfully set forth, in public conversation or otherwise, only such portions of the charter as would be palatable to the public: thus the additional members who were to form the body—the union of Gosport to it as a dependency which Portsmouth was to govern—and the right to run boats to and from Gosport and the Isle of Wight. His learnedship, also, in obedience to the mayor's commands, issued notices of a meeting of the corporation to accept the proffered boon at such an early day, that it would be unlikely that any of the non-residents could or would attend.

The fourth of September was the day appointed, and the mayor and the townclerk congratulated each other that they should carry their point without trouble. Of the fifteen members of the Corporation, six could be safely counted as voting for the acceptance of the new charter, and of the other nine four were non-residents; and although the townclerk had sent them official notices, he knew, by the party employed, that they would never reach them; and, in their absence, the courtiers would have a majority of one, besides old Pike, who was laid up with the gout, could not be moved, and had not left his chamber for a month. Full of these impressions they determined that the occasion should be one of rejoicing and merry-making through the town. The church-bells were to ring through the day, the drums and fifes were to play up and down the streets, the dockyard-men were to have a holiday, and hogsheads of strong beer were to be rolled into the streets and broached.

The morning came, and the sun shone far more pleasantly than did the countenance of the mayor, when he met old Pike hobbling on two crutches, in company with a non-resident alderman.

"Here I am, Master Mayor," said the latter, "but with no thanks to you, or the townclerk."

"And my advice to you is," said Pike, also addressing him, "that you further imitate the example of Judas Iscariot, by

hanging yourself; and then your ill-gotten pieces of silver we will distribute among the poor."

The two passed on, leaving his worship thunderstruck, and he was about to return home, when he was encountered by a young officer, with whom he entered into earnest conversation, which ended by the latter saying—

"Be of good courage. Master Mayor, and fear not the Sourcrouts; as yet you can balance them, and then your second vote will turn the scale. If the other fellows be not already in the town, I will take especial care they shall not have the chance of troubling you—so hie thee to the Guildhall, whilst I will post myself over the Landport gate."

They parted and within a quarter of an hour the gates of the town were closed, and the drawbridge raised by the commands of Captain Fitzjames, who had placed soldiers round the ramparts.

The church clock had scarcely proclaimed the eleventh hour when Colonel Norton and Wallop, followed by their three attendants appeared before Landport gate, but were denied admittance into the town.

"And who is he," said Norton, "that ventures to put forth any authority to prevent me from attending my duties as alderman, which I claim to do in virtue of our charter?"

"The man that dares to do it, stands before you," said Fitzjames, showing himself on the wall: "and my duty is to keep out of this good town, till the business now in hand be transacted, all persons who would stir up strife, and who are constantly plotting against the peace of the king, his honour, and dignity."

"And whom deign you to style plotters, Sir Upstart?"

"Thee, and such as thee, old Norton—I will not honour you with the title you usurp, knowing that when in the field you commanded none but rebels and robbers—I know you, and Wallop too, the adopted of the arch-traitor, Russell."

Wallop now threw himself off his horse, and drawing his sword, exclaimed—

"I defy ye! thou art but a pampered minion, and a bastard; come down and try thy skill with a plain Hampshire gentleman."

"It will not serve our purpose now, but we may meet hereafter. I am sorry I must tire your patience for another hour, when you shall find admittance, and till then, farewell," said Fitzjames, as he left his elevation and disappeared.

"What's now to be done?" said Wallop.

"To wait, even if it be till nightfall, or even till cock crow. Nought can surprize me; but come what may, 'No surrender,' shall be my cry," answered Norton.

The church clock at length proclaimed the noontide hour, and not long afterwards the ringing of bells, the firing of cannons, the beating of drums, and the shouting of the giddy multidude plainly told the mischief was done; and then the drawbridge was lowered, and the gate was thrown open, and Norton and his companions entered the town, and found the soldiers were withdrawn; and then made their way, as best they could, to the Guildhall, which stood then, as till a few years since, in the middle of the High street.

It is now necessary to glance at the proceedings of the corporation. At twelve o'clock there were twelve present, the absentees being non-residents. Pike, warmly supported by his friend Spicer, protested against their proceeding to business, as the proper notices had not been given; but the mayor, backed up by the townclerk, would not hear; and then moved that the new charter, which he did not attempt to read or explain, should be accepted by the corporation, and the old charter given up. In vain was it for Pike, or any other member, to attempt to speak; and, amidst angry wrangling, the mayor put the question, to which six responded aye, and six nay: upon which his worship said he should give the casting vote in favour of the acceptance, and then the motion was carried; old Pike contended that, by their charter, he had not a casting vote, and that a majority was required for any measure, otherwise it could not pass, and which was echoed by the whole of his five friends. Pike demanded the production of the old charter, which was at length produced by the townclerk, and angry discussions, leading at times almost to blows, ensued, when Norton, followed by Wallop, entered the room. He was warmly received by the defeated party, and was appealed to as to the wording of the charter, which was handed to him, and which he pretended he wished to compare with older charters lying before the townclerk; and having obtained them, he managed, through the connivance of his friends, to pass the document, about which there had been so much dispute, into the hands of Wallop, with the words, "take care of it," and who immediately left the room, mounted his horse, and was soon out of the town.

In the meantime Norton was pretending to compare one

charter with another, until he had entirely exhausted the patience of his opponents, and then the charters were demanded of him, and he returned *all he had* to the townclerk, when the late governing charter was found to be wanting. It was then said that such an alderman had taken it, and then another, when the mayor informed Colonel Norton, that he should hold him responsible for its production.

"And I promise your worship," said Norton, "it shall be forthcoming, *when right can withstand might*, and then, and not till then."

"Such being the case, I charge you with having purloined the document, and will commit you to the common goal for theft," spoke the mayor.

"Or rather, proceed against him by a civil action," said the townclerk; "Southwick manor can well pay a heavy fine with costs, and that would be more to our advantage, your worship."

"Be it so," said the mayor, "and here I dissolve the meeting."

One of the first things done by the Corporation, acting under their new charter, was to give authority to their townclerk to bring an action against Colonel Norton, late an alderman, to recover the lost charter, with costs and fine. Norton after having received the notice, replied, that he was prepared to defend the action; but to prevent its being too soon brought on to trial, found means, by a free expenditure of money, to get it postponed from time to time; and before it was brought to an issue, he had paid the debt of nature, and the remains of the sturdy warrior of the seventeenth century, rested side by side with those of his relative, the conformable prior of the preceding century.

As to the old charter, it had found a secure resting place among the muniments which were to descend to the future earls of Portsmouth; nor did it again see the light until after the Revolution; and "when right could withstand might." It was produced, and by a decree of the court of King's Bench, it was declared to be the legal charter of the borough of Portsmouth, and was recognized as such, until the passing of the Municipal Act, by which it was in great part superseded.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRISTMAS-EVE.

"Where Selborne spreads her boldest beauties round
The varied valley, and the mountain ground,
Wildly majestic!"

GILBERT WHITE.

GENTLE READER, transport yourself in fancy to the most sequestered and romantic of our Hampshire villages, which will for ever live in the pages of its natal historian; to whose shrine, year by year, many a pilgrim whose fancy has been touched and enthusiasm enkindled by his magic pen, wends his way to visit scenes so graphically described by one who devoted an entire life to the quiet study of nature.

The sun had finished his day's journey, and was gone. The journey had been a short one, hardly exceeding seven hours. Twilight had almost merged into darkness, and would have done so entirely, but for the gradual appearance of numerous lamps, high hung in Heaven, so that the drifted snow on the distant hills, and the lofty beeches on the Hanger, with their pendant branches encrusted with icicles, were clearly visible. There was a tendency to fog, but the mist was so thin as to be almost transparent, yet hazy enough to give to the least distant object a grotesque form, and very different to that which it had presented an hour before. The wind came from the north, noiselessly, but with that peculiar feel which indicated a stinging frost. All nature seemed at rest, or frozen up, and not a sound was to be heard save, at distant intervals, "the watch dog's honest bark." The little birds had slunk into holes and crevices, or taken shelter under the eaves of the cottages; the sheep and cattle were in the farm-yards, or in sheds, half imbedded in straw; and in the village, though it was yet early, not a person was stirring abroad; but the spiral columns which ascended from the chimneys to dissipate in the frosty air, and which diffused around the well-known smell of burning green wood, plainly told there was life within, and that preparations were being made for the morrow, the great feast-day and principal festival of Protestant England.

Towards the middle of the village, but at some distance from any of the houses, there was a huge dark mass, seemingly surrounded by unearthly Goliaths, and yet, in reality, it was none other than the old parish church, with its low Norman tower; and the seeming giants were but the tall elms of the churchyard. But within the church there was a light, sometimes to be seen at one window, and then at another, as if there were persons within who had occasion to move from one point to another. And such was the case—and the persons inside were the Reverend Peter Crotchet, formerly a fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and then Vicar of Selbourn; his two sons, John and James, lads of twelve and ten; and Master Muggins, the parish clerk, whose week-day avocations consisted of hedging, ditching, and thatching. For several hours they had been busily engaged in the adornment of the church with holly and ivy, a plentiful supply of which had been obtained, in the previous part of the day, by the two boys whose hands showed that they had not obtained their sylvan spoils unscathed.

A large heap, which three hours before laid in the nave, had been reduced to a single branch of holly, well studded with berries, when out spoke the clerk, flourishing the branch in his hand:

"Now, your reverence, for a finisher; where shall I put this cut, which I do think be the flower of the flock, though they be all goodly pieces? never better, hardly ever so well."

"Thomas," replied the vicar, "I leave it to you, as you have had more to do with this kind of work than I have."

"That be true, your reverence; I shall be three-score-five come Candlemas, and from the time I was a little chap, half the size of Master Johnny, I used to go to copse every tide-time to bring the wood for the church; for my father was clerk before I, and grandfather was clerk before he; aye, and before grandfather, grandmother's father was clerk, and so, I suppose, grandfather got the place as sort of heir."

The boys gazed with wonder, and began to entertain a higher respect for the Muggins's than had been their wont to show. The vicar smiled, and replied, "A very long time, Thomas, and I hope your son will prove fit to succeed you, and continue the line of clerks in the Muggins' family much longer."

Poor Muggins had no such hopes. Of his three sons there was not one he could turn to for comfort, or even speak of

with pleasure, so he shook his head, grunted "humph," and then turned the subject.

"I do know a good place, at the right of the pulpit, where the hour-glass used to stand in Mr. Knowell's time, and the iron-work is still there. Shall I, your reverence?"

"Truly you may," replied the vicar, "and it will form a good substitute for the glass; for if the one tells us that time flies—*Tempus fugit*, the other will remind us of the holy season—*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*"

The clerk then ascended the pulpit stairs, and securely placed the bough, and descending, exclaimed, "Man or boy, I never did see the old church so gay before. I should just like grandfather and great grandfather to come out of their graves and have a peep—bless 'em. Wouldn't they say it be grand? aye, that they would; the nave looks smartish—but the chancel beats all I ever did see!"

"And the chancel should be more adorned than the nave, it is the more sacred portion of the church. Have you not read, Thomas, that the Jews were required to beautify the sanctuary above every other part of the Temple. I am sure you must have read and remembered it, or you would not be fit to be a parish clerk. And now, Thomas, put the candle into the lanthorn, and we will trudge home;" and then, turning to the boys, "What will your mother say; shall we get a scolding? She will think you are lost, if she has had time amidst her cookery to think of you."

The party then left the church, the vicar and the boys remaining at the door till the clerk had shut it and turned the key; and who then, lanthorn in hand, led the way across the churchyard and adjoining paddock till they arrived at the vicarage.

The residence of the parson of Selbourn was at that time a building with no pretensions to grandeur or beauty; homely and humble—the walls formed of the rag-stone of the neighbourhood, and covered with thatch. The house rose no higher than a second floor, with what are called dormer-windows in the roof. The entrance was by a porch, which projected several feet, and which had seats on both sides of it, and over it was a trained honeysuckle. Between the house and the road, there was a small garden, which was separated from the latter by a hedge of box, which was kept in trim order by his reverence's own hands. Trained to the walls of the house, which had a southern aspect, there was

a vine, which was also duly tended by the vicar; and under it a row of bee-hives, the peculiar care of Kate, his second daughter.

Although the house covered a considerable space of ground, its internal accommodation was very indifferent. The rooms were large but low, and the communication one with another was such, as would not be tolerated at the present time, whilst the flooring of all the lower rooms was of stone. In one respect the house suited the vicar, it was spacious; and his family was large, consisting of a wife, four sons, and five daughters, besides a servant-maid: as much attendance as his humble means would allow, yet never man was more beloved by his poorer, or respected by his richer, neighbours than he was.

Ample as may be said to have been the accommodation of the house, one room of the ground floor served generally as parlour, kitchen, and hall; and in it were Mrs. Crochet and her young family, enjoying the cheerful blaze of burning beech-wood, coal being at that period but rarely seen in that neighbourhood. Our housewife and her two eldest daughters, Margaret, *alias* Meg, and Catherine, *alias* Kate; blooming lasses of the respective ages of nineteen and seventeen, had completed their preparations, and were resting themselves, when the latch of the door was lifted, and Muggins, lanthorn in hand, boldly entered, followed by the vicar and the boys.

Without perceiving the latter, Mrs. Crochet commenced, "Got back at last, Thomas, but where's your master? you have brought the lanthorn safely home. I am glad of that, lanthorns cost money;" and then, "Ah, father, I did not see you come in; and you, John and Jim—go into the chimney-corner and warm yourselves, for you must be almost shrammed; 'tis bitter cold, and you too, father, but your dear old church can always keep you warm; what have you been at all this while, rehearsing your sermon, as I have heard the player-folk do their tragedies and comedies?"

The vicar, who had taken his accustomed seat, and was loosening the waistband of his cassock, replied—

"Not quite so, Dorothy; we parsons be not like stage-players in the matter of plain speechifying, but singing is another matter, and to tell you the truth, I and the boys and Thomas have had a stave, and have practised the *Benedictus*, which I mean to have chaunted to-morrow, being Christmas-day, as we always did at Maudlin;" and then, turning to his

daughters, "and we will try it again presently, when the little chicken have gone to roost; but stay, Thomas has nothing to eat or drink; sit down man, and make yourself at home, you 're welcome; and girls—" Not another word was said, but within a few minutes the young ladies set before the old clerk a substantial, though homely supper, which he fell upon with a hearty appetite.

In the meantime Mrs. Crochet informed her husband that she had something to show him in another room, which announcement was attended with a glistening of the eyes of the little ones, and such a clapping of their tiny hands, that the old man was taken by surprise, and hastily rose from his seat, and followed his loved partner into the other room, accompanied by all the children, the seniors having enough to do in restraining the boisterous mirth of their juniors, and in preventing them from giving their parents the go-bye.

And there was something to surprise and please the worthy vicar—such a profusion of substantial fare as he had never seen but in the buttery of his own college. It was the united Christmas tribute paid by the more wealthy inhabitants of Selbourn to their respected and beloved pastor. There was venison from Woolmer forest, and wild-fowl from Woolmer pond; beef from the manor-house, and Norton; mutton from the Temple farm, and, what still more struck his fancy, the head of a huge pig, accompanied by other good things, which had been sent by his somewhat distant neighbour, the Squire Wither, of Bentworth Hall, and but a short time before, of Magdalen College.

This latter caused the old man's eyes to glisten, and then to be suffused with tears, whilst, with tremulous voice, he exclaimed—

"Aye! this is kind—and touches me to the core—of the grandson of my old friend, the brave and learned George Wither. He will never forget his *Alma Mater* when he sends to an old fellow of his college such an appropriate Christmas present. Aye, John," turning to his eldest son, "at Maudlin we always had a boar's head served up in gallant style, and to the sound of music on Christmas day; and I hope it may be so in your time, and long, and long, and long after that. You shall hear about it presently, when your mother hands round our Christmas cup. My neighbours are indeed kind to their poor old parson, and out of this abundance, mother, we must feed those who are poorer than ourselves: for of

those to whom much is given, much is expected, and then we shall have enough to keep the three feasts with old English hospitality. To-morrow we will content ourselves with ourselves, unless a friend should drop in; on Circumcision we will entertain the church singers, and then shall be cooked the boar's head, which, if it have not the grand music of Maudlin, shall be accompanied by a pipe and tabor; and on Epiphany all you young folk shall have a gala day, and invite your friends and playmates, and we will have hunt-the-slipper, blind man's buff, forfeits, singing, dancing, and king, queen, and Maid Marian."

"And, dear father, you must be king," said Margaret, coaxingly.

"No, Meg," replied the vicar, "I am rather like old Father Christmas. Dancing with silvery locks is not quite the thing. You shall be queen—Queen Margaret; not her of Anjou—she was a better fighter than dancer: ha, ha! St. Margaret the Scottish Queen—she was English born; but who shall be king?"

"I say my friend Harry Knight, of Street," cried John; a proposition which gave entire satisfaction.

"Harry is a steady and good boy," said the vicar.

"Harry is a comely lad," replied Mrs. Crochet.

"Harry is a sweet dancer," spoke Kate.

"Harry is a prime fellow," so said Jim.

"And Harry is a capital shot," again ejaculated John, "as good as any one I know."

"Aye, and sings well," rejoined Jim; "'Old King Cole was a merry old soul.'"

Margaret was silent, but there was a slight tinge of red upon her cheek, and a sparkle in her eye, which might have led one to imagine that she also had a preference for Harry Knight, of Street.

The party now returned to the kitchen, and seated themselves round the fire, and Muggins brought in a huge log of wood, and placed upon it, on which the boys gave a hearty huzza, responded to by all present. Mrs. Crochet now prepared to warm some mead of her own making, and the produce of her own bees, but before the family cup was filled, a portion of the liquor was poured into a leathern bottle, which, together with a large basket loaded with provisions, was given to Muggins, who now took his departure, having thanked his benefactors, wished them "a merry Christmas, and a

happy new year, and that their olive branches might be green and flourishing through many a sharp winter."

In good time the warm mead, together with slices of cake, were handed round, carol succeeding carol; Sue, the servant, contributing her mite to the harmony of the evening by singing a doleful ditty. The little folk were delighted, and clapped their hands with joy, and the happiness impressed on their countenances reflected on those of their parents, who were happy also. The vicar had his say about the serving up of the boar's-head at Maudlin, and narrated many of his college adventures forty years before; and also much about George Wither, of Bentworth Hall, and, as a proof of his just claim to the title of a poet, and as peculiarly appropriate to the season, rehearsed his sonnet commencing—

"Lo! now is come our joyfull'st feast,
Let every man be jolly,
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
And every post with holly.
Now all our neighbour's chimneys smoke,
And Christmas blocks are burning,
Their ovens they with bak'd meats choke,
And all their spits are turning."

The vicar had hardly finished the piece, when footsteps, as of a person walking at a rapid pace on the frozen ground of the road, were heard, and speedily followed by a loud knock at the door, which startled the merry group. The two boys answered the knock, and then ushered to the presence of their father a man, apparently of twenty-five years of age. He was of the middle height, with a countenance bearing the impress of honesty, as his hands did of industry. His dress was the Sunday apparel of an English artizan of that period, with no pretensions to foppery, and his demeanour was modest. He respectfully informed the vicar that he was a benighted traveller, having lost his way in his route to Winchester, which he hoped to reach that night.

"That you can hardly do, sir," replied the vicar, "but pray be seated by the fire, and warm yourself, for the clear blaze tells me that the frost is severe—and after your journey you need refreshment, but I see I am anticipated, so eat and drink with a welcome; it is a duty with our cloth to relieve the traveller and sojourner, and after your meal we will consider for your accommodation, for Winchester you cannot reach, being sixteen miles distant, even as the crow flies."

"Reverend sir, accept my thanks, but to the old city I must to-night, even were it for nothing else than a punishment on myself for having idled away some precious hours on my way."

"But thou canst not do impossibilities, so eat and drink, and after that we will discuss the matter."

A journey on foot of many miles and for several hours through the wild country to the east of Selbourn had given our traveller a keen appetite, which he gratified with moderation, and modestly declined many pressing invitations on the part of his hostess. The meal being finished, our host enquired of his guest how far he had travelled during the day, and what was the urgent need of reaching Winchester that night?

The young man was greatly agitated, and hung down his head, in order to hide the burning shame his cheeks revealed, paused for a time, and then speaking with tremulous voice, said—

"Reverend sir, I have acted foolishly, I may say wickedly, and may Heaven forgive me; and I feel that a confession of it will be a relief to my bruised spirit." He then went on to state that his name was Maurice Kalendar, a native of Winchester, educated as one of the choristers of the college, a smith by trade, but who, some months before, had been placed in the Royal Dockyard, at Deptford, through the kindness of the Lord High Admiral (James Duke of York), and that he was returning to Winchester on a visit to his widowed mother, who was blind and bed-ridden. On the preceding morning he left Deptford in company with a fellow-workman, whose home was at Guildford, where they arrived in the afternoon. Later in the day he accompanied his friend to a house of public entertainment, where he met several of his friend's former companions. The convivial cup passed freely, and by the dint of strong persuasion, he was induced for the first time to gamble.

The excitement pleased him, and he staked and lost some of the gold for which he had worked so hard, and which he intended to have presented to his afflicted mother, and would probably have lost the whole, but that some ill-behaved knave in conversation spoke in derision of an aged, blind, and crippled woman, whom he said ought to be killed outright. This turned his stomach; his poor old mother, as it were, appeared before him, and would have upbraided him, but he

rushed out of the room, intending to leave the house and town at once; but the keen air, acting upon his excited feelings, was such that he sunk to the ground, and was conveyed to bed in a state of insensibility. Morning brought not only its reflections but its punishment, and the roysterer of yesterday was so prostrate in body and mind, that he could not quit his bed till noon. Refusing all refreshments, he set out upon his journey westward, but whether mistaking the directions he received, or overcome by anxiety, he took the wrong road, and reached Godalming before he found he was not approaching Farnham. He rested awhile, and nature having regained her former place, appeased his appetite and quenched his thirst, and then renewed his journey over the barren wastes, marked only with stunted furze and heath, of western Surrey and eastern Hampshire. Over this lonely country well-defined roads there were none, drove-ways in the best times but dimly visible, and intersected in all directions, and now the marks almost obliterated by fallen snow. To add to his perplexity, about the going down of the sun he was involved in a thick mist, whilst his progress was interrupted by frequent stumbles; still he pushed forward, and in time reached the outer limits of the fog and barren waste. Tall trees were to be seen on either side; presently he heard the tinkling of the distant fold, and the barking of dogs; still pushing forward he scented the burning wood of a cottage, and felt a solid road beneath his feet, and a few minutes brought him in sight of the old church, and then at the door of the parsonage.

"My son," said the old man, "to tell you that you have erred were useless; your honest heart speaks stronger than I can; we are sinners all, and this day's journey has been a sufficient punishment for your folly—and remember, young man, we must not overtax nature or she will resent it. Stay you here for the night, and in the morning you will return to her you love, refreshed by sleep."

"Sir, I feel it a duty to set out to-night, and if I do not, to-morrow—my birthday, sir, besides—will be a day of grief instead of joy to her who so anxiously expects me, and I doubt not, prays for my safe arrival."

"Well, my young friend, as your mind is so firmly bent, wait till I have seen what may be the weather," and then the vicar put on his hat, and went out of the house, and surveyed the heavens, and then returned, rubbing his hands, and

shrugging his shoulders. "A clear bright starlight, at present; the moon will not rise these five hours, and before then we shall have a fall, there is a chilliness in the air which tells me so; besides the wind has somewhat shifted, and blows hollow, and in that direction, just above the horizon, there are some dark clouds, so I pray you, young man, accept our hospitality;" a request which was warmly supported by Mrs. Crochet and her daughters.

"Again, sir, I thank you for your kindness, but to Winchester I must to-night; I feel so blithesome and strong that ere four hours I shall be there. To stay would be misery alike to myself and mother."

"My good friend, the strength of your filial affection stops me from scolding your indiscretion, and since you are so determined, I will accompany you a short way, to place you in the proper route."

Our traveller having partaken of a parting cup, and thanked his hostess for her kindness, took his leave in the company of the vicar and the two boys. The party passed through the village and crossed several fields, and entered into a road running east and west.

"Your route," said the vicar, "if you could go as a bird or as an arrow flies, would be direct west, but as there are impediments in the way, you must content yourself with the road, which three miles hence passes through the scattered village of Tisted, and then under the lofty towers of Rotherfield; and pursuing it, you will arrive first at the pleasant village of Ropley; and two miles further, at the town of Alresford, where, should the storm overtake you, or your strength be spent, you may find shelter for the night. But stay, in case of accident, by getting out of your track, I have a remedy: mark you yon star?" (pointing to the polar star.)

"Truly, sir."

"You have read of the star which appeared in the east, as a guide to the Wise Men—but that star appeared but once, aye, as you remember it, at this holy season; but the star to which I point was so placed there by the same Providence, as a guide to all those who travel by land and by water."

"I have heard of a star that sailors go by," said the youth.

"That star remains always in the same place, at least to appearance. Now, know you those seven bright stars?"

"Truly I do, sir; they are what we call the 'Waggon and horses.'"

"Right; though the waggon is always pulling the three horses backward. Now, draw a line through the hind wheels of the waggon, and tell me where it points?"

"To the star you first pointed out."

"Right again; and remember that as that star is direct north, and your route is direct west, you must have it directly on your right hand. Should you miss the road, go as I direct you, you cannot be far wrong, and remember, the more you bear either to the right or the left, you are departing more and more from the point you seek; but keep the road, if possible."

"I do not think I can now miss my way, many thanks to your reverence; I will pull you no farther from your house. Many, many thanks for your kindness; and now, sir, good-bye; and, young sirs, good-bye to you too."

The vicar, and then the boys, shook the stranger heartily by the hand. "Good-bye, my young friend," said the former "I hope we may meet again, and hear good tidings of this night's adventure. Heaven bless and prosper thee!"

"Amen—and the same to you and yours." responded the youth; and they parted, the one on his journey long and dreary, and the others to their warm and happy home.

The rest which Kalendar had obtained, and the hospitality which he had received at the vicarage, and, above all, the consolatory advice and kindness of the worthy pastor, had infused new life into him; his strength was invigorated, his mind was at rest, and hope, which mounts on eagle's wings, reigned supreme. With a fleet step and animated spirit, he soon reached the village of Tisted, leaving the stately mansion of Rotherfield at some distance on his right hand, and from one of the turrets heard the clock proclaim the hour of eight. His route was here rendered dark and gloomy by the presence of numerous beech and sturdy oaks planted ere the Nortons became the lords of Rotherfield and Tisted, more than five centuries afore; and through them the wind moaned in fitful starts, not sufficient to disturb the hoar frost with which their branches were encrusted, but enough to give discomfort to our traveller, and to tame the exuberance of his spirits. Still he pressed onward with unabated speed, and in a short time reached the open country, leaving the demesnes of the Nortons far behind.

But here commenced his troubles; the road, which lacked fences on either side, was covered by a thin coating of snow,

sufficient to obliterate all certainty as to its direction. The stars still shone brightly, but the small dark spot in the east which had been observed by the vicar two hours before, was considerably enlarged, whilst the air was damp and chilly. Still onward, not a house, barn, or shed to be seen—a perfect stillness, a wilderness of sparkling snow. Hill after hill was surmounted, dale after dale was crossed, and neither deep lanes or tangled hedges materially impeded his onward progress. By degrees the dark cloud in the east gradually extended to the south, and then half obscured the heavens; and then the north, his guiding star, grew dim. His hopes now began to fail, and fear unwillingly intruded itself. The north star had ceased to shine, and its pointers were hardly visible. Still he resolutely pushed forward. The sky became more and more obscured, the pointers gone, and then the five other stars to which his attention had been directed: and he was as the tossed sailor on the ocean, knowing not how to direct his dubious steps, and began to think that in his route he had borne too much to his left. Suddenly he was startled by a creaking-cranking sound that broke through the stillness of the night. He stayed his steps to listen, and thought it nothing but the moaning of the wind, but within a minute he heard again the creaking-cranking sound which first alarmed him, and again and again was the sound heard. Having invoked the protection of the Most High, he started in the direction from which the sound seemed to come, stumbling over banks and hedges. Presently he discerned through the murky air something aloft, and upon a nearer approach recognised it as a gibbet, with its suspended irons. He resolved to touch it, and then to start again on his journey. He reached the spot, and laid his hand upon the upright post, but the accomplishment of the task brought a lassitude, a faintness at heart, and inclination to throw himself on the ground, and resign himself to his fate. A moment's reflection aroused him from his stupor: he leaned back against the post to rest himself, but had not the courage to raise his eyes to view the whitened bones of the malefactor glistening through the black irons which encased them.

But another alarm awaited him. Whilst yet resting him, there was a piercing cry—a shriek, as of one in the agonies of death, and he faintly saw before him an object which he supposed to be a human figure. Death now seemed to stare him in the face, yet having again invoked assistance from on

High, he advanced boldly to meet the enemy: but the seeming human figure was but a hawthorn bush; and the shriek that startled him but the the dying note of a hare, against whose body his foot stumbled, whilst he saw its murderer, a pole-cat, whose dark colour rendered it an easily-seen object on the snow as it glided away. To crown his satisfaction the seven stars were again visible, and by a steady gaze he could recognize his heavenly lamp, and on he went, but not with his former alacrity, for bodily exertion and mental anxiety had exercised their weakening powers. Within half an hour he crossed the battle-field of Cheriton, of which he had often heard, and then descended into the meadows through which the infant Itchen rolls its numerous transparent streamlets, but then frost-locked. He could now make but slow progress, the ice scrunching at every step under his feet, whilst above, the blackening clouds obscured the little light remaining, when he heard at a short distance from him, parties talking—

"Before day-break we shall have it a foot deep, or I shall be out in my reckoning; but then we shall be safe in the big house, and plenty of good cheer to keep us warm. We are an hour before our time for the midnight mass, but then there will be a bonny blaze, and toast and ale to welcome us."

"It is my first going."

"And I hope, it won't be your last. You must join us old ones out and out. The good time is coming—Duke Jemmy will be king, and then no hanging of priests for saying mass—no denying us the same rights as others. There wasn't a Catholic but was on the king's side in the war, when you and I were boys."

"That be true; and how have they been treated?"

"Like wild beasts: why they clapped our good Sir Henry in the Tower, and after keeping him a prisoner three years, let him go because they had nothing to prove against him. But never mind, the good time is coming, Duke Jemmy will be king; huzza, huzza, huzza!"

Kalendar now pushed forward with redoubled energy, with the hope of overtaking the party, but in his haste his feet slipped on the ice, and he fell to the ground; and before he could recover himself, he heard one of the party singing at a distance the Christmas Hymn, commencing "*Adeste fidelis læti triumphantes*," the music of which had been imported into this country some twenty years before with Catherine of Braganza, the king's Catholic wife; it has since been ren-

dered familiar to Protestant ears, by its adaptation to the ninety-fifth and other Psalms, and which still marks the land of its birth in its title, "The Portugese Hymn."

He was now at a loss how to proceed; from what he had heard he was satisfied that he was at no great distance from Titchbourn, but was fearful that by turning to seek the village, he should delay his journey; so on he went right-a-head. The distance of another mile brought him to a wild open country, and on looking towards the east he perceived indications that the moon was above the horizon, though her appearance was obscured by a thick cloud; but the hopes arising from that discovery were speedily dissipated by a murky darkness that thickened around him, accompanied by a heavy fall of sleet. Perhaps in the county there are few places more bleak and exposed than Longwood Warren, and that is where he now was. Still he pressed forward through the beating of the pitiless storm, though his courage began to cool, his confidence to abate, and his strength to fail, for at nearly every yard he met with some impediment, a straggling bush, or rabbit-burrow. Faint and weary, and scarcely able to draw one foot after its fellow, his mind turned towards his dear afflicted mother, and for her sake, rather than his own, he regretted that he had not accepted the vicar's hospitality, and not exposed himself to his present danger, for he felt that ere long he must sink and die. What would be her grief at the loss of her darling boy? Who would support her, and who would comfort her declining years? Death would claim her for his own! These reflections cast additional weight on his almost exhausted frame, when his ears caught the sound of distant bells. He stayed and listened, whilst the sounds ascended the snow-clad hill, he recognized the well-known peal; and then enthusiastically exclaimed, "All right—all right—mother, your boy is coming—yes, dear, dear mother, he is coming." He again stayed and listened, and being reassured, with renewed spirit pushed forward in the direction of the sound. Still he had to grope his way in comparative darkness, yet his exertions were such that, ere the peal had died on his ear, he had got beyond the uncertain ground on his way homeward. The bells which gladdened his sinking spirit were those of the Cathedral which, at that time, rang a midnight peal at Christmas, a substitution of the midnight mass of the olden time.

The difficulties of the journey were not yet over. The ground, though firm and presenting no obstacles to the traveller in the form of bushes and holes, was uneven, and in some places precipitous—the hollows of former roads. A rapid descent brought him to a narrow valley, with the ground on either side rising like a wall. The north star assured him that he was going direct west, and the light was such as told him that when he should emerge from the valley he should know where he was, and on he went buried in thought. The walls right and left are now behind, and the moon sheds her light around him. As one aroused from a long slumber, he started and looked around, and recognized a scene long familiar to his sight; at his feet was the newly-formed canal, and straight before him the well-known church and hospital of St. Cross; close at his right hand rose the hill of St. Catherine, calling up all his boyish remembrances; far to the north-west was the scaffolding of the king's intended palace—nearer to him was the huge mass of the Cathedral—and still nearer, the College tower, rising above the surrounding plane trees—their incrustation of snow sparkling in the mild beams of the moon. His perils and dangers were now past, and he felt himself at home; and in the fulness of his heart there burst from his lips the burthen of the old Wykehamical song:—

> "Domum, domum, dulce domum,
> Domum, domum, dulce domum,
> Dulce, dulce, dulce domum,
> Dulce domum, resonemus."

He now turned to his right, and with rapid feet ascended the river side, and then threaded the streets of the city till he arrived at a humble habitation on Silver Hill, and in another moment was by the bedside of her he loved, and by whom he was beloved, for "he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow."

CHAPTER XX.

THE MILLER'S BOY.

"I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; ——— one who with his songs and flashes of merriment was wont to set the table on a roar."

SHAKESPEARE.

In our last chapter we over-ran the progress of our tale, and we must again revert back to our old friend, Alderman Foreright, with whom we parted company at Magdalen Hill Fair.

The alderman having from conversation which he had with young Wrang been satisfied that Tyrrell would be at Weyhill Fair, determined to go there with the horse and caravan which he had detained, and to persuade Will Foster to accompany him, and to assume the character of the mock doctor, and to dispense his infallible remedies. As the latter willingly consented, frequent discussions ensued between the pair as to how they were to proceed. The alderman was in high spirits, was confident that this time he should run down his game, and would chuckle as he promised Foster that Tyrrell should have the honour of riding in his own carriage from Weyhill to Winchester gaol; but he did not give himself the time to reflect that he had no authority to take him into custody, or any witnesses to show that he had been guilty of either forgery or theft; but he was satisfied in his own mind on both points, and that was enough for him.

Foster was as much bent on the expedition as was the old man, but for different reasons, of which the first was the most honest. The alderman had been his steady friend, and did not desert him when he had fallen under the displeasure of the king, and, in return, Will was ever anxious to oblige and please him, and in this instance he also was gratifying his own fondness for wild adventure and fun. A week from home, from the sound of "Ancient Nance's" scolding tongue, would of itself have been sufficient: but then he was to be a Moorish doctor, arrayed in a flowing robe of silk, with a turban on his head, and a gold-headed staff in his hand; and to discourse to wondering rustics, on the wonderful cures which

would be effected by the use of the medicines which he had to sell. This latter so tickled his fancy, that he would frequently shut himself into a room, and rehearse before a mirror what he should, or would, say to the gaping bumpkins ranged around, which was highly offensive to his plain-speaking spouse, who, as often as she heard him at his antics, would burst open the door, and upbraid him for being the biggest fool in all Winchester. Mocked and scolded at home, but resolved the humour should not be beat out of him, he wandered further a-field, and practised his part between the hills, or on the sides of the river.

Weyhill Fair, which now commences on the tenth of October, did, previous to the alteration of the style, 1752, commence on the twenty-eighth of September; and, on the day preceding it, Foreright and Foster left Winchester. The arrangement was, that the former should ride with the latter as far as Andover, where he was to alight, obtain lodgings for himself in the town, and walk up each morning to the fair-ground, where he was to remain during the day, and return to the town in the evening; whilst Foster was to drive on to the hill, where he was to remain during the whole time of the fair, unless they should be fortunate enough to meet with Tyrrell.

At the period of our tale, the road from Winchester to Andover was, for the greater part of the distance, a mere track, or drove-way across open downs. The commencement of the road was through a narrow and steep lane, with a high bank, and trees and bushes on either side, and was known till within the last forty years as "Gallows Lane," from its leading to the place where malefactors convicted at the assizes were executed, unless, as was frequently the case, there was an order from the judge that the criminal should be hanged and gibbetted on the spot where his offence was committed. On the summit of the hill, on the left hand or western side of the road, just beyond where the dark lane terminated on the open down, stood the gallows, not then removable; and so constructed, and so deeply morticed into the earth, as to defy any injury which might be attempted on them The timbers were the trunks of trees, only barked and squared, bound together by strong clamps of iron—and an assize hardly ever passed without furnishing it with one or more victims.

From this place to the spot where the road descends into

the valley of the Test, a distance of eight miles, there was not a single farm, cottage, barn, or tree, unless a thorn can be dignified by such a title; nor a single acre of permanently-enclosed land on either side. To be sure, there were in places, parcels of land which had been enclosed by dead hedges, but that only for mere temporary purposes, where it had been thought that the ground, from its long rest, was good enough to be broken up, and to bear a few crops, after which it would return to its former condition, as down, and the fences either left to rot, or to be carried away as firewood, when a similar experiment would probably be made on another place.

As the road, or track, was intersected in every direction by numerous other tracks and drove-ways, running either from village to village, or from farm to farm; the parties travelling not accustomed to the route, were always in danger of mistaking their way; whilst the others could only make themselves certain by the recognition of divers thorns, either in groups or standing singly, which they had to pass, or could see, on the down. Thus, what is now called "Worthy Grove," consisted, at the time spoken of, of a number of thorns, and was known as the "Worthy Clump:" another, but widely-spread group, gave name to its immediate locality, as "Thorny Down;" and another of stunted black thorn, obtained the cognomen of "Bransbury Scrubs."

On the down there were numerous patches of furze, and on it might occasionally be seen flocks of our English ostrich, as the great bustard, has sometimes been denominated. This bird—so rare, even if not extinct in Britain—is of the size of a turkey and, in running, so fleet as to be a match for any dog, save the greyhound, and was to be met with in this neighbourhood, not more than a century ago. Glancing over the down, the eye might here and there catch sight in the distance, of a diminutive church, with its surrounding homestead, cottages, trees, hedge-rows, meadows, and pastures fair.

On descending into the valley of the Test, a different scene presented itself. The road had now a hedge on both sides, thickly-studded with ash and elm trees, of luxuriant growth, with their autumnal tint gilded by the setting sun; and beyond them, there were meadows through which a considerable body of water poured in rapid and pellucid streams: and on the left, the partial fall of the leaf revealed to sight the

then modern mansion, and a portion of ruins of the ancient Priory of Wherwell, the seat of Lord Delaware.

Wherwell Abbey was founded towards the close of the tenth century by Elfrida, the widow of King Edgar; and if we are to believe monkish legends, and place our trust on tradition, the foundation was a peace-offering to Heaven, for her having been concerned in two murders; the one of her husband Ethelwold, a Saxon nobleman, that she might marry the king; and the other of her son-in-law, King Edward the Martyr, that her own son should succeed to the throne. Be that as it may, it is certain that Elfrida was not only the foundress, but the first abbess of Wherwell.

In the adjoining village, locally known as "Horrell," our travellers stopped and refreshed, at the White Lion, which was crowded with parties going to the fair; and after a short delay, they again started, and having ascended a steep hill, and crossed an open country, found themselves in the place where they were to part company.

The present clean and compact town of Andover, in the reign of the "Merry Monarch," possessed many of the characteristics of a mere village of our own time. The houses were in general detached buildings, hardly any of them rising above the second floor, or having any better covering than thatch. The streets were neither paved or lighted, whilst the roadways were seldom in a decent state of repair. The only object worthy of notice in the place, was the fine old church, with its handsome Norman tower. Its population hardly exceeded one thousand souls, but the town possessed a considerable trade as the capital of the north-western portion of the county.

By a charter granted by King John, and confirmed by succeeding monarchs, it was governed by a corporation designated "The Bailiff, Approved Men, and Burgesses of Andover," in whom were vested the right of electing the two members for the borough.

For many years the corporators had been content to keep the even tenor of their way, to attend to their own local affairs, and had felt but little interest in affairs of state. They were indifferent whether their Parliament-men were Whigs or Tories, Patriots or Courtiers, provided they were good neighbours, and countenanced and promoted the trade of the place. The Wallop family had been closely connected with Andover for upwards of a century, and many of them had,

from time to time, represented the borough and had secured one of the seats in perpetuity. The other member for some years had been Edward Pollen, lord of the manor of Redenham, who, though a sound Protestant, supported the measures of the court, and was opposed to the Exclusion Bill.

The state of the nation was now such that compromises were deemed disgraceful, and to use a Hampshire phrase both parties were ready to "go the whole hog;" and the question now arose, should Andover in future be represented by two Whigs, or two Tories?

Wallop was determined that both seats should be filled by pledged Exclusionists, and he entered the field with decided advantages in his favour. The long connection of his family with the town, his own popularity, the Protestant panic arising out of the pretended revelations of Oates, Bedloe, and company, the intense dread there existed throughout the country of Popish plots, and above all in the zeal, tact, and discretion of his friend and agent, Daniel Dowling, the deputy-steward, or townclerk.

The Court party found a staunch friend and discreet adviser in the vicar, the Reverend Doctor Breston, who had lately resigned the head-mastership of Winchester College, to spend his remaining days on a living to which the Warden and Fellows had presented him.

The doctor, who was a clear-headed man of business, was esteemed by the good people of Andover as the most learned scholar of the day, one who was sure to be made a bishop, and the only wonder was that such had not been the case long before. He was also popular from his urbanity, general kindness, and almost unbounded charity. Yet, with all his learning and popularity, he was no match with the civilian, who, without great acquirements, carried everything before him, on the strength of his ever-smiling countenance, "ready wit, and passing pleasing tongue."

There is an old saying, that "a man may say anything without giving offence, if he only knows the manner how," and it was a knowledge which the deputy-steward had, either learned, picked up, or had born in him; for say what he would, Dan Dowling never gave offence to anybody, or made any enemy, and could stand a rebuke without loss of temper—for "if right he smiled, if wrong he kissed the rod." He was even, though a political opponent, a favourite with the worthy doctor, who was wont to say of him, "that saucy varlet of a

miller's boy, with whom no one can be angry, presumes to play the part of old Cromwell on a small scale, and to select and elect our mayors, burgesses, or members, whether we will or no. My scholars at Winchester were wont to read of Warwick the Kingmaker, and now, if any of them will come and see their old master he will show them Dan the Mayor-maker."

The borough of Andover still derives a small portion of its annual income from the tolls of Weyhill Fair, and at the period of our tale claimed and received the whole of the tolls of the fair, as the lords of the manor of Rambridge, and held there under a grant from Queen Elizabeth, a Court of *Pie Poudre*, in which the deputy-steward presided, and who, on the third or principal day, gave a grand entertainment.

Foster having left the old alderman in Andover, as agreed, was on the fair-ground early enough in the evening, to secure and pay for a standing-place for his van, or doctor's shop, and to arrange as to the keep of his horse; but it was not till after the midnight hour that he laid himself down to sleep amidst his "villainous compounds." Before daylight he was aroused by the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, and the shouting and swearing of drovers, and it was not long ere he was amongst them.

Although the number of sheep now usually penned at Weyhill exceed those which found their way to the hill two centuries ago, in the proportion of four to one, it was even then the largest sheep-fair in the kingdom.

As the science of crossing, and thereby improving the breed of sheep, was neither understood, or thought of, the flocks exhibited a greater variety of form than they would at present. Not only counties and districts, but even small localities and farms, had their stock, with which no admixture was allowed, as it might destroy some peculiarity, perhaps defect, which was pleasing to the owner, and thus for centuries,

> "From sire to son,
> Unalter'd, unimproved, their shape did run."

The business of the fair was half over, before Alderman Foreright ascended the hill, and it was with some difficulty that he found Foster, and then not at his van which was still closed, but at a neighbouring booth, discussing the qualities of a horse, which was standing it the front of it. He no sooner caught sight of the other than he commenced:

"Alderman, we have made a mistake, and come to fair a day too soon. There is nobody here but buyers and sellers of sheep, and none of them want physic, so it's no use to open shop to-day. Nor will the other show himself to-day,—and if he do, there stands the van, and he'll know that the driver can't be far off; and he will hang about, and I shall see him—and then I will hedge him off till to-morrow, by saying I shall have some money for him. So you take a turn round the fair, and then go back to Andover, and leave me to manage the business, as you know his Majesty always did."

The alderman did not like the suggestion, but he felt that he was powerless, and left the booth, muttering to himself, and he determined to watch the van, for he thought it possible that Tyrrell might make his appearance. To consume the time, he wandered about the fair, returning occasionally to the van, but no one whom he could suspect to be Tyrrell approached it, and, at length, tired and exhausted, and thinking that he had been too hasty in the matter, and was an old fool for taking such a scape-grace as Foster into his confidence, wended his way back to Andover.

The next morning the old boy was again on the fair ground, and his spirits revived on seeing Will in his strange disguise, mounted on a platform in front of the van, discoursing with a flippant tongue and daring impudence of manner, on the merits of his medicine—and wonderful were the cures which had been effected from the use of it. The alderman was as well pleased with his address as were a score of gaping bumpkins; but it was some time before he had an opportunity of speaking to Foster, and when he had, all he heard was that Tyrrell had not made his appearance.

The business of the fair this day, was the hiring of agricultural servants, and few persons, unless they required labourers, or sought a service, were on the ground. Foster was soon disgusted with his hearers, considered his eloquence was being thrown away, and shut up his standing, and the alderman having taken a few turns through the fair, returned more sad than ever to Andover.

On the third day however he again showed himself on the hill, and when he saw the thousands congregated, and, from the lofty eminence saw, in every direction, hundreds of persons, either on foot or horseback, or in carriages, approaching the ground, his spirits were buoyant and he again felt assured of success. It was whilst walking about in a merry mood, that

a neatly dressed young female came up and thus saluted him.

"Good morning, Alderman Foreright, I wonder to meet you so far from home. Our old city can ill spare you."

The old man looked up and saw it was his especial favourite, Alice Greenly, and immediately shook hands with her, and having been introduced to her friends, learned that she was on a visit to Farmer Fairford, of Abbot's Anne, and that she had come with him and his family to fair, and that they had been honoured with an invitation from Master Dowling to dine with him in the grand booth, which they all intended to do.

"And no one would be more welcome than yourself, sir," said the farmer addressing the alderman, and then adding in a whisper:—"the jolly widower is fairly smitten with our young friend, and a good match it would be. Come, sir, join our company, as we mean to have a turn through the fair, and enjoy ourselves."

The invitation was readily accepted by the alderman, as it would afford him an opportunity of having a few words with the damsel. Whatever it was he had to communicate, he was so earnest, and the lady blushed so deeply, that Farmer Fairford thought he must be courting in his own behalf. Amongst the objects that attracted the notice and amused the alderman's new acquaintance, was Will Foster, who had given up dispensing infallible medicines, but still, in his outlandish dress, was telling of fortunes, which he professed to do for any pretty lass, for the price of one kiss; or two pence from any other person.

"Impudent scoundrel," muttered the alderman, "he must have served an apprenticeship to my Lord Rochester."

Alice Greenly thought she knew the voice, and so she told Foreright, who answered her by saying, "These fellows, who have sold themselves to the Devil, can assume any voice, and take what form they please."

Not long after this, who should join their company than Master Dowling himself, who shook hands with his friend Fairford, and raised his hat most respectfully to Alice, and having been introduced to Alderman Foreright, expressed the delight he should experience by being honoured with his company at dinner.

In good time the grand booth was full of visitors, and the deputy-steward of Andover was the happiest of men. With a coun-

tenance radiant with smiles, he insisted that his fair guest from Winchester should occupy the post of honour, and have for her right hand supporter the old alderman.

As the expenses of the feast were defrayed by the Corporation, there was no stint, whilst the deputy-steward gloried in a well-ladened table.

"Here we have the fat of the land," said the chairman, addressing Foreright; "flesh, fish, and fowl, from far and near. In front of me is a Whig buck from Hurstbourn, and yonder is a Tory goose from Redenham. I prefer the former, what say you?"

"I say the latter," replied the other resolutely, as if his political principles were involved in his choice of food.

The chairman smiled, but said nothing.

At such a motley assembly, and on such an occasion, the afternoon conversation was little better than banter, and jokes which would not be tolerated at the present day, passed freely round.

The Bailiff of Andover, in proposing the health of the chairman, connected with it the name of the young lady from Winchester, whom he hoped would soon be a resident of their town; and the former, in returning thanks, said, he trusted that the bailiff's words might be verified; and he could not wish for a better partner through life than the lady who had graced their feast by her presence, which was much applauded by the company, except old Foreright, from whose knowing look it might be surmised, that there was some one who had a prior claim to her affections.

The friendly conversation which had passed between Foreright and Dowling, induced the former to intrust the latter with the business which had brought him to Weyhill, adding to that which is already known to the reader, that Tyrrell, on leaving Young Wrang at Botley, said he should go down into the West country, and try his luck at preaching and spouting against Popery, for the people down along were so ignorant and prejudiced, that they would believe any mortal thing against the pope, the duke, and their supporters; and that he had since heard, through cheesedealers, that such a person was at Shaftesbury, and afterwards at Sherbourn, and that he said he was going further west.

"Ho, ho, ho," exclaimed Dowling "I know the man, or rather I have heard of him? What you say tallies with Squire Wallop's story at our last venison feast. My Lord

Russell, when in Devonshire met with a man who charmed him by his violent invectives against the Duke of York, and without asking any questions, took him into his service, brought him into Hampshire, and made him his secretary; and sent him on an especial business to Portsmouth, where the villain deserted my lord's service, went over to the enemy, and revealed his secrets,—and there the scoundrel is, under the patronage of our Lord High Admiral, one of the clerks of the dockyard."

"And there I'll go," shouted Foreright, "the double villain shall escape me no longer."

"Gently, my friend, not too fast," replied Dowling." "You know where he is to be found when you have fully prepared your case, but as yet you have nothing to show he is the man. Therefore, let him rest a time, and fatten, if he can, in the Royal pasture, which he will not leave, but from compulsion. Get together your witnesses, and spread your net, so that there shall be no escape."

"I suppose I must give in—for although I be the older, I take you to be the wiser, man," said Foreright, composedly; and the same evening he returned to Winchester.

CHAPTER XXI.

HANTS LENT ASSIZES.

"Now the golden morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermil cheek, and whisper soft
She woos the coming spring.
New-born flocks in rustic dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance,
The birds his presence greet."

GRAY.

THE last day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and eighty-three, seemed to confirm the anticipations of an early spring. From the feast of St. Valentine, when it is said birds choose their mates, the weather had been open, clear by day, and with very little frost by night.

In the gardens, the snowdrops, the crocuses, and even the daffodils were in full bloom, and against the walls might be seen the delicate bloom of the apricot. In the coppices—the primrose, on sunny banks—the violet, on the open down—the furze, in the hedges—the black hellebore, and in the meadows—the marsh crowfoot, displayed their several colours. The leaves of the elder were more than half expanded, the hazel, the alder, and the poplar, were loaded with catkins, whilst the buds of other trees and flowers seemed almost ready to burst, and amongst them were to be seen newly-constructed nests. In the groves were to be heard the pleasing strains of the song-thrush, the clear whistle of the blackbird, the softer notes of the warblers and finches, the harsh croak of the raven, the cooing of the wood-pigeon, the cawing of rooks, and the laughing sound of the green woodpecker: and in the open, the clamour the great plover or stone-curlew, and in striking contrast—

> "the skylark warbling high,
> His trembling, thrilling extacy;
> And lessening from the dazzled sight,
> Melts into air and liquid light."

In the warm sunshine floated myriads of gnats, the bee winged his way in search of the expanded bloom, the small-tortoise-shell and brimstone butterflies sported in the genial breeze, whilst, in some sheltered spot, the speckled snake slowly released itself from its coil, and awakened from its winter's slumber.

Winchester exhibited the customary bustle of an assize town on the day of the opening of the judges' commission. The bells in the Cathedral tower had proclaimed the arrival of the High Sheriff, Henry Mildmay esquire, of Twyford. He entered the city on horseback, with his chaplain riding by his side, and escorted by his four-and-twenty javelin men; not, as of later date, picked out in the streets, but composed of his own copyhold and other tenants. They were mounted on their own horses, most of them probably taken from the plough, and wore a loose blue tunic, fastened round the waist by a broad strap of unwashed leather, and on the right arm there was a silver plate engraved with the Mildmay crest—a rampant lion.

It was late in the afternoon, when the High Sheriff had re-assembled his retainers for the purpose of going out to meet the King's Justices, who were expected from London by the

way of Alresford. The Judges on the present occasion, were Sir George Jefferies, who had been recently appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench, and Sir William Scroggs.

The sheriff now appeared in a suit of armour, and his chaplain in his gown and bands, which seemed incongruous with his jack-boots reaching half way up his thighs; and that his gown should not incommode him in riding, its skirts were tied round his waist. The cavalcade, in addition to the javelin-men, under-sheriff, and other officials, consisted of all the citizens (save the mayor and aldermen), who had, or could obtain the use of a horse, for to go out to meet his Majesty's representatives, was accounted a mark of loyalty.

The reason why the mayor and his brethren did not leave was, that it was required of them that they should receive their lordships at the gate, and present them with the keys of the city, which his worship would receive back when the assizes were brought to a close. They were also careful not to go beyond the bounds of their jurisdiction, and to appear in their robes, and insignia of office, without the moat, which would assuredly have created a riot and probably their robes would have been torn from their backs, and their maces wrenched from their sergeants and thrown into the river;—such being the existing jealousy as to local privileges, between the denizens of the City and those of the Soke.

The spot where the high sheriff was to meet the judges was on Magdalen Hill, about the distance of a mile from Winchester. At the proper time, he and his retinue, which had been increased by farmers from the neighbouring villages, were on the green sward, and here they were detained for a long time, for neither of their lordships made his appearance, or any messenger to explain the cause of delay. One hour passed away, and then another, with no arrival from the east. The sheriff groaned under the weight and burthen of his cumbrous attire, the parson was fidgetty, and the javelin-men almost in a state of mutiny.

"Here must be something wrong," said the under-sheriff, addressing his superior, "and to detect the cause I will push on to Alresford, where I may glean what it is. It may be that their lordships have stopped to dine; and, by repute, our Lord Chief Justice is very loath to leave a bottle, or to forego his jest."

"Then hie thee on, good Jenkins," replied the sheriff, "and

tell my lord, in broad English, that if the contents of the wine-flask be acceptable to him, that I and my men have no relish for the wind on the open down; and, in your absence, I and his reverence will try at some scheme to divert our attendants, some of whom I find are beginning to get very crabbed and crusty."

The under-sheriff galloped off, and was gone for the best part of an hour, during which the considerate and kind-hearted high sheriff arranged that his tenants should try the quality of their steeds in a series of matches made by mutual consent, and for which he offered prizes, contenting himself with the office of starter, whilst the parson acted as umpire.

Good humour again prevailed—all present forgot they were waiting for my lord judge, being too much interested in the racing. The sun had gone down when the under-sheriff was seen returning in company with a number of horsemen—not the king's justices, but their clerks and two or three barristers on their way from London to Winchester.

The trumpet sounded—the diversions were given up, and the Twyford and Owslebury yeomen ranged round the sheriff, with their halberds in their hands as his body-guard. The under-sheriff approached his superior, and introduced to him his fellow horsemen.

"But where are the judges?" asked the sheriff.

"From the information that I have been able to obtain," replied the other, "their lordships are probably at Basingstoke, or some place in that locality; or it may be, they are, or soon will be, guests of his Majesty's new Attorney-General, Sir Robert Sawyer, at his country seat at Burghclere."

"How say that,—when you yourself received an official communication that their lordships would come to Winchester by way of Alton and Alresford? and here we are at our post ready to receive them, and have been these three hours. It suits not our temper to be fooled in this fashion, to say nothing of the indignity offered to our county."

"Pardon me, Master High Sheriff," spoke the clerk of Sir George Jefferies, "my honoured master, the Lord Chief Justice, and the worthy Sir William Scroggs, started yester morn from London on the western circuit, and last night reached Alton, where they were met by Squire Knight, of Chawton, who insisted that there lordships should be his guests, and then Sir George, whom all the world knows to be a free speaking man, said, 'By G—, Knight, we know you to be of the right

sort, a stickler for the king's prerogative, and having no pestiferous cant in your composition, and by the grilled bones of Saint Laurence, if he ever existed, we will come and taste your mutton, and sit judicially on the merits of the contents of your cellar.' And then, Master Sheriff, instead of taking up our quarters in the good town of Alton, we jogged on to Chawton House, where we were most hospitably entertained. I have been in the habit of going the circuits these ten years, but never did see greater hospitality. For judges, clerks, and servants it was all the same—an abundance of the very best. There was a goodly party to meet their lordships, and Sir George can make himself at home anywhere, if the company be jolly, and I am sure they were last night, or rather this morning, and scores of flagons of wine were emptied. My lord must have been well on—for I heard him shout, laugh, and sing, and roll out those funny oaths which he picked up, no one knows where; and how his servant got him to bed I cannot guess."

"Not very decorous conduct for a new-made judge," said the sheriff.

"That may be, Master Sheriff," replied the clerk, "but do not judge him, until you see him on the bench with a shuffling witness before him. Then see how he will scowl at the least prevarication; the truth he will have, whether the witness will tell it or not; and he has the happy knack of thrusting his fist, as it were, down his maw and dragging it up, even as one of our kings did the heart of a lion."

"I shall soon have an opportunity of judging for myself," answered the sheriff; "but how is it that his lordship is not come on to open the commission?"

"In consequence of his late sitting and boisterous mirth, and perchance the *quantum* of wine which he swallowed, Sir George did not leave his chamber much before noon,—and, even then, he was so much exhausted, that he had a cup of mulled wine and a toast as a reviver, and then he became quite cheerful; so that when Squire Knight said he had a buck from Woolmer Forest, which he intended that day to turn out before his hounds, his lordship declared that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to be one of the party, and go he would,—for no one had a greater right to hunt the king's bucks than the king's justices, and that he had a special right being a lord chief justice. Sir William Scroggs said, 'Brother, you cannot go; we are wanted at Winchester;'—

but Sir George answered him 'But I will go, and Brother Scroggs, you shall bear me company.' 'It may not be,' said Sir William, 'we shall give great scandal to the people, and Parliament will take the matter up,' upon which Sir George laughed heartily, and used one of his funny oaths, as he said, 'Don't you know, brother, that his Majesty intends to dispense with Parliaments as long as he can, as he has found them so troublesome of late; and even when he is obliged to call one, our sham patriots will think of nothing else, or do nothing else, than to try to alter the succession. So don't trouble yourself on that score, I will take all the responsibility as I am chief, and you only a puisne judge."

"But what did his lordship say about the assizes?" enquired the sheriff.

"I will tell you presently," answered the clerk, "Sir George having made up his mind to go, nothing could turn him, and he fairly forced Sir William to go with him, which very much pleased Squire Knight and friends; and then it was settled that we, the judges' clerks should go on to Alresford, where their lordships would join us, and if they should not, we were to stop some barrister going to the assizes, and ask him to open the commission; and, as luck would have it, here are three, one of whom is Master Jefferies, Sir George's eldest son, and he must act in his father's name."

"And have you heard nothing of their lordships?" again spoke the sheriff.

"We witnessed the turning out of the stag, and the turning on of the hounds; and rustics said he was running towards a place they called Medstead, and, as I should think, in a north-western direction. Whilst at our dinner at Alresford, we heard that the stag, with the hounds close at his heels, passed through a place called Candover, and was making towards Basingstoke, and that some stout rider, which I am sure from further description was Sir William Scroggs, had been thrown, received some injury, and had been taken into a cottage. Further I cannot say, but now I think Sir Sheriff, we may at once proceed to open the commission."

"I hardly know," said the Sheriff, "how to act,—I came here to receive his Majesty's Justices,—and, instead of wise and grave men, we have a young gentleman hardly out of his teens. I have hitherto thought that the commission of assize could be opened, in the absence of a judge, only by a sergeant-at-law, or one of the justice's counsel, which I cannot

suppose either of these young gentlemen to be; but that I am not obliged to know, and if they choose to take the responsibility."

"Most willingly," said the youth who was to be the second Lord Jefferies. "I am for the time the representative of the Lord Chief of England; and now, Master High Sheriff, we will descend the hill and enter the city, which, as I have been told, stands high in the favour of his Majesty."

The disappointment which was experienced by those who had ascended the hill was shared by those who remained in the city, especially by the ladies. The same afternoon, the Mayoress, Mistress Buskin, entertained a number of her female friends in the large room over the Westgate, the same in which are now deposited the archives of the City, and from it, they were, at the proper time to ascend to the flat roof by which it is surmounted, where they could see to the best advantage the cavalcade descend, and then wend its way round Saint Giles' hill, and afterwards come up the High street in its route to the County Hall. Our hostess, in the determination to maintain her own dignity as the wedded wife of the first magistrate of the most ancient city of England, was arrayed in a rich crimson gown edged with Mecklin lace, and with a broad velvet band, ornamented with gold figures round her waist. On her head, as significant of her matrimonial character, she wore a cap; but whether it resembled a turban or a coronet it would be hard to say; but there could be no dispute that it was thickly-studded with pearls; and as she was one who never did things by halves her attendants were four pages dressed in the approved fashion of the day, but who in reality were four of her husband's shop-boys metamorphosed for the occasion.

The refreshments, of spiced-cakes, moulded into quaint forms, oranges, and dried fruits, with choice and scarce wines and beverages (tea and coffee, which were then far more costly),

> "From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
> Whilst China's earth receives the smoking tide;
> At once they gratify the scent and taste,
> And frequent cups prolong the rich repast."

It was fortunate that the enjoyment of these luxuries, the conversation which naturally ensued in respect to the countries and people from whom they were obtained, the encomiums paid to the taste of the mayoress, and the deep obligations for

her great kindness, followed by her own modest acknowledgments, consumed time, and made the company forget the professed object of their visit.

Previous to the arrival of her visitors, Mistress Buskin had placed one of her pages on the roof with strict orders to keep a good look out towards Saint Giles' hill and to let her know when he should first catch sight of the procession returning to town. For a long time the sentinel was on his post, unquestioned and without seeing anything to report, and afterwards he may be said to have played the part of Sister Anne in the nursery tale of Blue Beard; but his replies were somewhat different,—and to the question of "what do you see," his answers were that he saw boys going up or coming down the hill, but without the least intimation that horsemen were to be seen. Wearied from the long delay and somewhat ruffled in temper, the mayoress left her company and ascended to the roof, and from it she could see nought but sheep grazing round the summit of the opposite hill, and children going up or coming down the white track on its northern side, and she was about to descend, when one of her visitors said they were all coming up to have a peep. And so they did, and although with patience they waited till the shades of evening had closed around them, not a single horseman was visible, nor the least intimation that the judges would soon arrive; and then, taking counsel together, they resolved to return to their respective homes, to which their hostess raised no objection, and excused herself from the disappointment of her friends by laying the whole blame on her husband, who she declared would be unworthy of being Mayor of Winchester, unless he committed to prison both the Judges and Sheriff.

About the same time that the tea-party assembled at the Westgate, the mayor and aldermen arrived at the Eastgate, being preceded by their sergeants-at-mace and attended by the Townclerk, bearing on a velvet cushion a huge gilded key, which his worship was to present to one of the Judges on his entrance into the city. Friendly chat, old jokes, and still older stories wiled away more than the usual waiting time, when the Townclerk who, although he had been in office ten years, was quite as fussy as on the day of his election, thus began.

"I declare, your Worship, our being obliged to wait here in the cold and in the open air is scandalous behaviour on the part of some one. I do not say whom, but I do say it is

truly scandalous, and an indignity to a Corporation, of which his sacred Majesty is an enrolled member, and one which had its mayor long before London, York, or Bristol."

"Which you have told us," interposed Foreright, "at least nine hundred and ninety-nine times. It is our duty to wait the good time of the Lord Chief Justice, as the representative of his Majesty; so patience, Master Townclerk; patience, old friend Timothy."

Friendly conversation was again resumed which was interrupted by the grumbling of Alderman Wonger, who declared that he was tired of waiting, and wanted his supper, and if my lord judge wanted him, he might send for him, and off he went; an example which was followed by three other aldermen, but in a less open manner, as they severally stole away unnoticed, leaving the honours of the city to be done by the Mayor, old Foreright, and the Townclerk. To add to the discomfort of the latter, he, on looking round, found the town-sergeants were missing, having adjourned to the *Red Hat*—a favourite resort in leisure hours—and leaving their maces in the charge of a boy not ten years of age.

"Now there! now there!" ejaculated the functionary,—"was there ever a man so plagued as I am? what with waiting for judges, grumbling aldermen, and drunken town-sergeants, it is enough to make one go distracted;" and then, turning to the boy, "Go directly, and find the sergeants—I suppose you will find them over their cups, and you know where. Tell them I insist on their coming back!"

The boy went to the "Red Hat," but did not come out again; and within a quarter-of-an-hour the Townclerk sent another, and then another boy, for the sergeants, but they did not make an appearance. He fumed and fretted greatly to the amusement of old Foreright, who said he doubted whether his learnedship would see them again until they heard the sound of the trumpet.

The mayor was very uneasy, not that the waiting of a few hours was any grievance to him, but he dreaded the anger of his spouse, and that she would blame him for this unlooked-for delay. Turning to the Townclerk, his worship, in his simplicity, enquired whether the Judge might not have stopped at Alton to try a few of the prisoners.

"No," replied the other, "the assizes must be held in this city, as I can inform your worship they have been these five hundred years; but it may be that the Lord Chief Justice,

who is the King's own coroner, may have held an inquest there, if it were only to show his power and authority."

Further discussion on the subject was interrupted by the sound of the trumpet, denoting the near approach of the judges, or their deputy; and, as Foreright had anticipated, the town-sergeants were forthcoming, whose great pleasure was to tease the Townclerk.

Within a few minutes the cavalcade entered the city, but Master Jefferies, though acting as deputy to his father, did not deem it prudent to draw up at the gate to receive the key, according to ancient custom, but proceeded straight to the County Hall, where the Commisioners of Assize—*Oyer* and *terminer*, and general gaol delivery, were duly ready. The omission of a time-honoured custom was highly displeasing to the old alderman, who muttered that such an offence would have boen severely punished in the reign of the Royal Martyr; and irritating to the Townclerk, as it deprived him of reading an address to their Lordships, and of receiving their commendation in return. The Mayor whose thoughts had a homeward tendency, sought to allay the anger of his friends, and invited them to his house, in the hope that their presence would shield him from the sharp tongue of his wife.

It was three hours later that the Lord Chief Justice found his way to Winchester, which he entered at the north gate, having left his learned brother unhorsed and severely bruised in the hunting field.

The stag was uncarted at a place still known as the Four Marks, on the road from Alton to Winchester, and, having taken a survey of the country, trotted off at a gentle place in a northerly direction, skirting Chawton wood on its western side. Within half an hour Squire Knight, with his well-selected pack, and accompanied by the two judges and numerous friends, made their appearance. The hounds were laid on, and off they started, followed by our Chawton Nimrod, whose clear voice "cheered on the opening hound," and resounded through the sylvan tracks which owned him lord. On forward, hounds and horsemen went through the entangled brushwood, and over the stiff clays of Medstead, towards Wield, where the hounds were at fault and checked, and the scent was lost. A welcome holla was heard, the tawny beast having tacked to the left, and gone into a neighbouring coppice, in which direction the squire led his hounds, who ere long proclaimed they were on the right scent; and on they went, crossing

Chilton Down, where from time to time the huntsmen obtained a view of the stag, who was far in front of them, whilst the Lord Chief Justice, impatient from delay, poured out in rapid succession ejaculations which would now be thought blasphemous, but which then had no other effect than to create a laugh. From the Down, the pack descended into Candover valley, and crossed the stream at Totford, and were making towards Micheldever, when they were again at fault, having overran the line of scent. Here was a breathing time for the men and horses which Justice Scroggs greatly needed, and expressed his desire of giving up the chase, but the Lord Chief Justice would not hear of it, and swore by the liver of St. Hubert that is was a pleasure equal to hunting down a brawling Whig, or a canting Puritan. In the meantime, Squire Knight cast back his hounds to where they had crossed the stream, and with them ascended the valley, when *Ringwood* gave tongue, and off they all started, the quarry in full view before them, as they passed through the three Candovers to Nutley Church, where the hounds were again slightly at fault, and where the intelligence arrived that Sir William Scroggs had been thrown, and it was thought his collar-bone was broken.

"No matter," said the Lord Chief Justice, "those who play at bowls, must expect rubbers.—If he gives up the ghost, or has a broken limb, I shall have double work to-morrow."

Within a few minutes the hounds were on the line again, and taking a north-western course, passed on through Dummer to North Waltham, where the stag turned to bay, and held the hounds at defiance till Squire Knight, Jefferies, and four other huntsmen rode up and, by great exertion, got the hounds off.

"And now where am I, and which is my nearest way to Winchester?" said the Lord Chief Justice; "I must be there to-night."

"The distance thence is a dozen miles," replied Knight; "but come with me, we will make free with my old friend, Stephen Terry, of Dummer Manor—like myself, a staunch friend of Church and State; and I can insure a welcome for the Lord Chief Justice."

"I have him in my note-book," said Jefferies, taking out an ivory tablet, "as a well-affected Hampshire gentleman, and as such I will wait upon him, and perchance in his loyalty he will re-horse me to Winchester."

Stephen Terry, of Dummer, the representative of ancient Hampshire was delighted with the opportunity of displaying his loyalty, and the Lord Chief Justice was not only hospitably entertained, but pressed to stay during the night; but the other, thinking that the whole business of the Assizes would rest on his shoulders, declined the invitation, and went forward to Winchester the same evening.

February went out like a lamb, but March came in like a lion,—aye and a roaring one. Midnight had hardly passed, when the moon and stars, which before had shone brightly, were obscured by dark clouds. A gushing wind from the north-east brought snow and hail, which continued descending for hours, so that at daylight there was, on every side, a wide expanse of dazzling whiteness. At intervals the wind came in fitful starts, with force enough not only to clear the branches of trees of their encumbrances, but to rend and scatter them, and to drive the fallen snow before it, filling hollows, and rendering travelling an impossibility. The storm continued in full force all the fore part of the day, and its violence was such that the Lord Chief Justice had in his mind not to attend the customary service at the Cathedral: but remembering that such an omission would be highly displeasing to the High Church or Tory party, who would deem it an insult, he resolved to go, and at the conclusion of its service, proceeded at once to the County Hall.

This venerable pile, with which most of our readers are probably acquainted, was for many years supposed to have been the chapel of the ancient Castle, but it has recently been satisfactorily shown that it was its great hall, and the very place where the fifth Henry received the ambassadors of Charles VI., King of France, the full particulars of which are so graphically narrated by our Warwickshire bard. At the period of our tale the interior had not been divided into two courts, with a space between them, but was open from end to end, showing to advantage the elegant clustered columns by which the roof is supported. On the western wall there was, as now, the royal arms, and on the eastern the celebrated relic of antiquity known as King Arthur's round table, perforated in a score of places by bullets, the work of the Parliamentary soldiers forty years before. Under the royal arms there was an elevated platform, across the nave, or central part of the building, in the middle of which was the judge's seat, raised still higher. In front of the platform there was

the counsel's table, and beyond it a slightly-raised platform, having a bar breast-high, at which prisoners stood when undergoing their trials, and witnesses in giving evidence. On one side of the table there was an enclosure for the jury, and on the other side a few benches for the convenience of attorneys, witnesses, and others. The fitting-up of the eastern end of the hall corresponded with that of the western, and when two judges were present, they were within sight and hearing of each other. In the middle of the hall there was an hearth, in which a fire was enkindled at all Assizes and Sessions, which if not required for warmth, was needed for heating the irons with which convicted prisoners were often branded.

The Lord Chief Justice having taken his seat, the crier of the court made the customary proclamation, and then the clerk of the arraigns read from the Commission of the Peace the names of all the then magistrates of the county, seventy-eight in number, of whom only sixteen answered to their names. The judge frowned, and although he did not then speak, made an entry in his note-book. The clerk of the arraigns then summoned in succession the mayors of Winchester, Portsmouth, Lymington, Christchurch, Whitchurch, Petersfield, Basingstoke, Romsey, Newport, Newtown, and Yarmouth; the bailiffs of Andover, Stockbridge, Alresford, and Overton; and then the three county, and four district, coroners, of whom only five appeared.

"How is this?" shouted the judge, as he laid his right hand violently on the desk. "This most miserable attendance is contumacy to his sacred Majesty in the person of his own Chief Justice;" and then turning to the High Sheriff, who was seated on his left hand, said in an angry tone, "Sir, I would have you know that I think your County has disgraced itself. From upwards of five-score persons whose bounden duty it was to attend and hear our charge and, if required, to serve on the grand jury, we have not one-fifth that number."

"My lord," said the sheriff, pointing to the windows, "the weather is a fair excuse for many, and the roads, as I hear, have become impassable."

"That is no excuse," replied the judge in a surly tone. "The parties ought to have been in Winchester, even as I was, over-night. They must be made an example of, and shall be: and we here order and direct that every one whose name has been called, and has not answered to the same, is

fined in the sum of ten pounds, which together will make an acceptable present to the Treasury. And mind ye, Sir Sheriff, that the whole of the fines be obtained and paid into his Majesty's Exchequer before the next Assizes, or otherwise we shall not only hold you responsible for the money, but inflict a fine on you for the non-performance of your duty."

The Grand Jury was then sworn in, and Challoner Chute Esquire of the Vine was selected as their foreman, and the usual formalities having been complied with, the Lord Chief Justice proceeded to address them.

"Gentlemen of the Grand Inquest, I am sorry that only thirteen gentleman are to be found to serve on the Grand Jury for this large and important County. I do not charge those gentlemen who ought, but have not, attended, with disloyalty, but I do say that they have shown great disrespect to their sovereign, and to the laws of the land. Be the weather what it may, fair or foul, we, the king's Justices, must be at our post, and so ought those gentlemen, who have been so highly honoured and favoured as to have their names inserted into the commission of the peace, and elevated far above their fellow-men. I am happy in finding there are not a great number of prisoners for trial,—the paper before me contains only twenty-seven names; but before I proceed to call your attention to some of the cases which will be brought before you, I must say a few words on another subject.

"Gentlemen, It has pleased the King of kings, and the Great Ruler both of Heaven and Earth, to give us, as His vicegerent, a sovereign under whom we live in all the affluence of peace and plenty, under whom we safely and uninterruptedly enjoy our religion, the greatest blessing on this side of immortality. Our lives, liberties, and properties are inviolably secured; every man is safe under the shadow of his own vine, and can eat the fruit of his own labour; and whilst our neighbours suffer the calamities of war, we are surrounded with all the blessings of peace, and sleep securely under the government of a gracious and merciful king.

"Gentlemen, several of you are old enough to remember the miseries and desolations of a civil war, when evil men rose their hands and smote the Lord's anointed, and the sad days which followed, under which our country groaned for many years—when all religion as well as sovereignty, and all obedience, duty, and deference to superiors, was quite lost.

"Alack, gentlemen, what do we find at the present time, and even in this very county? men so hellishly inclined as to seek to renew these horrors, by interrupting the succession to the throne, and defrauding an innocent and well-intentioned prince of his birth-right, and endeavouring to force our good king to disown and disinherit his own brother; and all this under the pretence of saintship, liberty, and zeal for our glorious Protestant religion. I tell you, gentlemen, that a regular succession is a Divine appointment, and he who rebels against it, wars against the ordinances of Heaven.

"Alas, gentlemen, when we find a zeal for religion made use of as a subterfuge and cloak for such impious practices, it gives too much occasion for our enemies to think us atheists; the very Turks will hate us, and the Pagans detest us, as the most irreligious and profane people in the world. Oh that we should have such a generation of vipers among us; and yet I tell you, gentlemen, they are to be found in your county, and what is more, the hall of him who was in his life-time the Blessed Martyr's stanchest friend, and his majesty's wisest councillor, is polluted as the hatching-place of plots, and combinations against the dispensations of Providence and the laws of the land.

"Gentlemen, I question not your loyalty—I question not your attachment to the person and family of our most gracious sovereign; and, in conclusion, I would advise you, in the words of the Wise Man, 'If sinners entice thee, consent thou not,' for surely the law shall overtake them 'whose feet run to evil.'"

The conclusion of the charge consisted of remarks on several of the cases on the Calendar, and the remainder of the day was occupied with the trials of the prisoners, and here nothing further of note occurred, than that just before the rising of the court, the Grand Jury returned a true bill against Michael Flamborough, *alias* Peter Craven, *alias* Geoffry Forbes, *alias* Francis Tyrrell, for embezzling money, the property of his Majesty, at Portsmouth; and another true bill against the same, for stealing a certain document, namely the last will and testament of Jeremiah Delpot, at Winchester; and also for forging another document, purporting to be the last will and testament of the said Delpot.

CHAPTER XXII.

A TRIAL OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

"We must not make a scarecrow of the law,
Setting it up to fear the birds of prey,
And let it keep one shape, till custom make it
Their perch, and not their terror."
SHAKESPEARE'S *Measure for Measure.*

On the third day of the Assizes Lord Chief Justice Jefferies having taken his seat on the Crown side of the hall, and his Majesty's Attorney General Sir George Sawyer, with Mr. Munday as his junior, sitting at the counsel table, a prisoner about forty years of age was released from the fetters with which he was encumbered, and placed at the bar.

Clerk of the Arraigns.—Michael Flamborough, hold up your hand [which he did]. Thou standest indicted by the name of Michael Flamborough, *alias* Geoffry Forbes, *alias* Peter Craven, *alias* Francis Tyrrell, that, not having the fear of God in thy heart, and being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil, that thou on the 28th day of December, in the thirty-third year of the reign of our most illustrious and excellent Prince Charles II., by the grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland King, thy supreme and natural lord, that thou being in a place of trust, namely a clerk in his Majesty's dockyard at Portsmouth, did, forgetful of thy duty, most wickedly embezzle and afterwards did most basely abscond with certain monies entrusted to thy care, the property of his Majesty the king, what say you to this indictment—Guilty or not guilty?

Prisoner.—Not guilty.

Clerk of the Arraigns. — You are further indicted that thou did, in the city of Winchester, under the name of Francis Tyrrell, on the 7th day of September, in the eighteenth year of the reign of his Majesty, wickedly and maliciously did take, steal, and carry away a certain document, being the last will and testament of Jeremiah Delpot, since deceased; and you are further charged with forging a certain document, purporting to be the last will and testament of the said Jeremiah Delpot, deceased, with the intent to defraud Agatha Kalendar, Maurice Kalendar, and other kinsfolks, of the said

Jeremiah Delpot deceased. What say you to this indictment?

Prisoner.—Not guilty.

Clerk of the Arraigns.—By whom will thou be tried.

Prisoner.—By God and my country.

Clerk of the Arraigns.—God send thee a good deliverance.

Then proclamation was made for the jurors empannelled, to try the issues, and twelve men were sworn in without a challenge on either side.

Clerk of the Arraigns.—Michael Flamborough, hold up thy hand. Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner and hearken to the charge [the first indictment being read]. You are to enquire whether he be guilty of this offence, and if you find him guilty you are to enquire what goods or chattels, lands or tenements, he had at the time he committed this felony, or at any time since. If you find him not guilty, you are to enquire whether he did fly for it; and if you find he did fly for it, you are to enquire what goods or chattels he had at the time of the flight, as if you had found him guilty. If you find him not guilty, and he did not fly for it, you are to say so, and no more, and hear your evidence.

Lord Chief Justice.—Prisoner, does any one appear in your behalf as counsel?

Prisoner.—No, my lord, I am equal to the task, and will show my innocency.

Mr. Pollenfex.—My lord, I have been especially retained, and am come from London for the purpose to watch the case, and if necessary to defend the prisoner on the second indictment.

Lord Chief Justice.—Eh, Eh! how is this? The prisoner says he is undefended, and you get up and say you are specially retained.

Mr. Pollenfex.—Even so, my lord, but my client is not the prisoner, but a gentleman whose property is involved in the issue of the case, which charges the prisoner with purloining and forging a will.

Lord Chief Justice.—And who might that gentleman be?

Mr. Pollenfex.—Sir Pharaoh Ledger, my lord—a gentleman of unquestioned probity, and one on whom his Majesty only a few months since conferred the honour of knighthood.

Lord Chief Justice.—I have his name in my tablet as a well-affected person; but say you what interest has he in the case in question.

Mr. Pollenfex.—In being the possessor of the whole of the

property mentioned in the will of Jeremiah Delpot, which he inherited from his father, and who, as I shall be enabled to show, purchased it by a good consideration of Captain Marmaduke Delpot, the son of the testator.

The Attorney General.—My instructions, my lord, are, without casting any reflections on the character of Sir Pharaoh Ledger, that the property passed from Marmaduke Delpot, who is called a captain, but who I am informed was a pirate, not for a real and reasonable, but a mere colourable consideration, Sir Pharaoh's father being then a money-lender at Wapping, living under the name of Abraham, and was an undoubted descendant of the Patriarch, but whether by the way of Isaac or Ishmael, I will not presume to say.

Lord Chief Justice.—By zounds! Sir Robert, we are not now sitting at *Nisi Prius*, but on the King's business, and we cannot stay to enquire whether the consideration spoken of was real or fictitious, but we may hear more of it, if this present indictment be not sufficient to settle the prisoner's business, for he is charged with a heinous offence. Mr. Pollenfex, I cannot hear you now—so, Mr. Attorney, please to proceed with the trial.

Crier of the Court.—Oh yes! All manner of persons are required to keep silence under the pain of imprisonment.

Attorney General.—May it please your lordship, and you gentlemen of the jury. You have heard the nature of the offence with which the prisoner is charged, and I need not tell you that a breach of confidence is a heinous offence, but here we have the sin in an aggravated form, and accompanied by the grossest ingratitude. The prisoner had only a short time ago been admitted to an office of profit and trust in his Majesty's dockyard, through the kindness and consideration of the Lord High Admiral, and yet on the first opportunity he abuses that kindness by appropriating to his own use monies which belonged to his Majesty, whom we may justly consider as the father of his people. A greater scamp than the prisoner, I shall show you, by evidence, can hardly exist. Mark you, Michael Flamborough, *alias* Geoffry Forbes, *alias* Peter Craven, *alias* Francis Tyrrell—what honest man can want four names? a good christian and surname, and they that have more you may fairly suspect to be knaves. As the evidence is in part circumstantial, it is necessary that you should have before you the previous history of the prisoner, and I will show you that for the last seventeen years he has

been wandering about the country in various disguises and under various names, living either by plunder, or by imposing upon the credulity of simple-minded people. At one time a crimp, and then the keeper of a brothel in London, anon he was a wonderful Moorish doctor, who could cure every complaint, and then he was a fortune-teller, and last he turns preacher, a conventicle man, a second edition of that mad Jack Bunyan, and went raving and canting the country round, preaching against the King's prerogative, and the duke's right to the succession, for which alone he ought to have been caught up and put in the stocks. Now for his history. It seems he is a native of this town, and that while a boy, he entered into the service of Jeremiah Delpot, who was steward in the well-known hospital of St. Cross during the evil times which preceded his Majesty's happy restoration. The character of this Delpot does not stand very high, and we have nothing to do with it; but he seems to have behaved well to the prisoner, who remained with him till the time of his death, being employed during the latter portion of the time in the collection of his rents, and it is here that we meet with the first illustration of the prisoner's character, for although old Delpot was very kind to him, supported his parents in their old age, and gave him a house to live in, he repaid him by the basest ingratitude, and in conjunction with a notorious swindler, Marmaduke Delpot, the old man's bastard, did steal his will, and place in lieu of it another document, which I shall prove to be a forgery.

Mr. Pollenfex.—My lord, I object to the course taken by the Attorney General. The prisoner is now being tried for embezzling money, and all reference to old Delpot's will is irrevalent.

Lord Chief Justice.—Strictly speaking it is, but we must allow Mr. Attorney some scope.

Attorney General.—The learned gentleman opposite objects to my making any reference to the prisoner having stolen old Delpot's will, but I am not inclined to forego my right, to include it in my address to you. Does he flatter himself that he may save the will case from exposure, and think I will content myself with proving the prisoner guilty of embezzlement, and then leave him to be dealt with as his lordship shall think meet? I can assure him that will not be the case, and therefore I would advise the learned gentleman to throw off all disguise, and appear as the prisoner's counsel,

for assuredly, as my name is Robert Sawyer, I will probe to the bottom of this will mystery, be the issue what ever it may.

Lord Chief Justice.—Then, if that be the case, Sir Robert, you had better proceed with the second indictment—charging him with stealing and forging the will of the said Delpot.

Mr. Pollenfex.—The prisoner now stands on his deliverance on the charge of embezzlement, will your lordship direct an acquittal on that charge?

Lord Chief Justice.—No, no; certainly not.

Mr. Pollenfex.—But, my lord, you cannot try two charges.

Lord Chief Justice.—Silence, man—I will do as I deem proper. The course may not be quite regular, but no matter. I will hear it at once, and so go on Mr. Attorney. Have you your witnesses?

Attorney General.—Yes, my lord, they are here in court.

Lord Chief Justice.—Then call them, I will brook no delay.

The Clerk of the Arraigns then informed the prisoner that he was to be tried on the second indictment.

Mr. Pollenfex.—I am not instructed to defend the prisoner.

Lord Chief Justice.—Then the court will see justice done to the prisoner. Now, Sir Robert, you need not waste our time by talking to the jury, but call your witnesses, and let us get into the marrow of the matter at once. But what do you intend first to prove?

Attorney General.—That the prisoner's real name is Francis Tyrrell.

Lord Chief Justice.—So be it—I am ready.

Attorney General.—Let the Rev. Christopher Bilston stand up [which he did, and was sworn].

Attorney General.—Please to state to my lord what office you hold.

Rev. C. Bilston.—I have the honour to be the Precentor of the Cathedral, and Registrar to the Lord Bishop of Winchester, and I produce the will of Jeremiah Delpot, who died in the year of the Plague, 1667.

Mr. Pollenfex.—I object to the production of the will as injurious to the interest of my client. His lordship is not trying a civil cause, but a prosecution for felony.

Attorney General.—The production of the will is necessary as showing a forgery has been committed, and I contend that private interests ought not to stand in the way of public justice.

Lord Chief Justice.—Let it be admitted, after due evidence,

that the will was proved, and afterwards kept in proper custody.

Attorney General.—Were you the registrar when the will was proved? and if so, say by whom, and any particulars relating to it?

Rev. C. Bilston.—I was then the Registrar, but had been only admitted into the office a few weeks, and the parties examined upon it were Marmaduke Delpot, a natural son of the testator, and a person of the name of Francis Tyrrell.

Attorney General.—Look at the prisoner and say whether he was the man.

Rev. C. Bilston.—I cannot venture positively to assert that he is the man, it is so many years ago. Yet it seems to me that he is; he is of the same height, somewhat stouter, and he has the same cast of countenance; but I cannot sware to him.

Lord Chief Justice.—Then your evidence goes for nought on that point. Have you anything else to say?

Rev. C. Bilston.—I remember there was some talk about the will at the time, and one or two parties called upon me about it, but the Plague was then raging so dreadfully in our city, and the inhabitants were so frightened, that nothing was done.

Attorney General.—Let Robert Wonger stand up, [which he did and was sworn] and tell his lordship who you are.

Wonger.—Lord, I thought all the world knew Bob Wonger, who is butcher to the King's majesty when he comes to Winchester, and I would have you to know I am one of our aldermen.

Attorney General.—Well, well. And now tell me, Mister Alderman, do you know the prisoner?

Wonger.—To be sure I do. It be Frank Tyrrell. I knew him ever since he was a little chap, not so high as this bar. Old Tyrrell the pig-killer lived at St. Cross, and Frank used to go to the Hospital for broken victuals, for the old fellow was a sad scamp, and could never keep a penny in his pocket. Then, when Dr. Lewis was turned out from being master, when the Roundheads were uppermost—old Delpot was made steward, and Frank Tyrrell went to live with him as errand boy, and that is five-and-thirty years ago at least, and then he became Master Delpot's clerk, and managed his rents until the old man's death. That Frank Tyrrell was always a slippery dog,—I would not trust him with a bunch of dog's-meat.

Lord Chief Justice.—You are not asked about the prisoner's character, but how you know him to be Francis Tyrrell.

Wonger.—By his points, my lord, even as I should know a sheep or an ox. Points are the things, let me once mark them, and I should know any sheep again in a flock of a hundred.

Attorney General.—But what are the points you marked in him?

Wonger.—I don't think I could well explain—but I know him, and would wager a surloin of beef fit for the king's table against a bushel of onions——

Lord Chief Justice (angrily).—Sir, this is not the place to talk of wagers. How do you know the prisoner?

Wonger.—Well then I know him because I do know him, and always have known him. I know him by his height, make—though that be somewhat changed, his features, his puritanical mug, and those false eyes, for he never could look you in the face, and I never knew him laugh in my life.

Attorney General.—By anything else?

Wonger.—If he would show me his left hand, it would either clench the nail, or prove that I am altogether wrong. [The prisoner here turned pale and concealed his left hand.]

Attorney General.—What about the prisoner's left hand?

Wonger.—It bears a mark both front and back, I 'll warrant, though I have not seen it these twenty years. It was stabbed through with a bradawl, and in my presence.

Attorney General.—Let us know the particulars thereof.

Wonger.—Well, please you, as I was saying, it was more than twenty years ago, and I had started as a butcher on my own account, but it was in a little way, and old master Delpot was very often my friend—folks in general did not speak well of him, but I found him a true man, and very honest withal. Many and many a pound did he let me have to go to market, which I always repaid in due time, and that well pleased him. Now this Frank Tyrrell was his clerk, and although he always pretended to be very sanctimonious, and a Puritan like his master, I knew him to be a very devil in grain; there was not a looser fish in all the city. Now it happened that one evening I went into the Red Hat with, it must have been Farmer Snuggs, to settle for some sheep I had of him, and there we had some ale, and smoked a pipe. I and the farmer sat at one table, and at the other table there was Frank Tyrrell, Tom Steele, the carpenter—poor fellow,

he died afterwards of the Plague, and two other of our townsmen. They four were playing at cards, and we looked at him, and watched some shuffling tricks of Tyrrell, but for a time we said nothing, and then I nudged Tom Steele to watch the other, and so he did, and presently caught him trying to conceal a card under his hand and to work it up his sleeve, whereupon Tom seizes up his brad-awl which was on the table, and then with all his force—and Tom was a terrible strong fellow—drove it right through his left hand, and pinned it and the card to the table.

Prisoner [excitedly].—It is a lie.

Wonger.—It's true that you bellowed like an ox on the first tap of the pole-axe. [And then turning to the Judge] He then sunk as dead on the floor, and he was taken to bed, and in bed he bid for three or four days, and we all thought he would have died; and because he should not lose his place or get into disgrace in the town, we agreed to say that Steele did it by accident, and that I should see Master Delpot and tell him some story to get him off the right scent, and so I did; but I don't think he believed it, for he often twitted me in our dealings, and said with a knowing wink, 'This is as true as your story about Frank Tyrrell.'

Attorney General.—Now, Master Alderman, you spoke just now of your having had many money transactions with the deceased Delpot, and must frequently have seen him use his pen; can you swear to his handwriting?

Wonger.—Why, I think I ought to it, for I have seen Master Delpot write scores and scores of times; and yet I should not like to swear to it, for you see I am no scholar. Not I. Had to work hard when I was a boy, and never learned so much as the horn book.

Lord Chief Justice.—Man alive, what are you talking about? you an alderman, and I suppose a Justice of the Peace!

Wonger.—Truly, my lord, I am all that. I am not a forward man in our city business, though sometimes I do take my seat on the bench, but then our townclerk does all the writing, and tells us what we should do in other matters.

Lord Chief Justice.—And you, I take it, can neither read nor write.

Wonger.—There your Lordship is wrong—for I can read print, as I do my Bible and Prayer Book every Sunday, and some writing, that is, if it be plain; and as to writing myself,

I can sign my own name, and manage to keep my own accounts.

Lord Chief Justice.—You are an honest fellow, though a blunt one, and not over learned. It were well that many others were the same, and then we should have less hatching of treason, and false expounding of the Scriptures. Sir Robert, this honest fellow cannot assist you in your present enquiries.

Attorney General.—I am satisfied with his evidence, my lord.

Lord Chief Justice.—Now prisoner do you ask the witness any questions? He has sworn that your name is Francis Tyrrell.

Prisoner.—That I deny, and would ask him if he was at my baptism.

Lord Chief Justice.—That is not necessary, he says you passed by the name of Francis Tyrrell, and that is sufficient. Anything else?

Prisoner.—Nothing—all I can say is that he is mistaken.

Attorney General.—Call John Foreright [which being done, he was sworn]. Now inform his lordship and the court, who you are, and what you know of the prisoner?

Foreright.—Please your lordship I am a native of this city, and here I have lived three-score and ten years, and have been one of its aldermen ever since the blessed Restoration of his Majesty. Although my eyes be getting dimmish, and my memory at times rather faulty, I am satisfied that the prisoner is that Frank Tyrrell who was old Delpot's handy man. I knew him when he was a child, and his father before him, and all his relations. He is a good deal altered, but the more I look at him, the more sure I am he is Frank Tyrrell. I remember him as a boy, and I remember when he was a man and used to collect old Delpot's rents; and he lived with the old man till his death, and then he came into a legacy of £100 under his will, and soon after left Winchester; but I have reasons for thinking that the will was forged, and that the parchment which was found on the prisoner when he was apprehended was the right will.

Attorney General.—Now give me your reasons why you think it to be a forgery.

Mr. Pollenfex.—My lord, I object to the question. Let the witness be asked to tell what he knows, and not to give his supposition of a point which should be investigated in a

civil court and not at the criminal bar. My client is prepared to defend the validity of the will at the proper time and place, but I protest against his right being called in question, or even insinuated against, in this irregular manner.

Attorney General.—I have already stated that I prefer no charge, or wish to insinuate ought against the character of Sir Pharaoh Ledger, whom I am willing to admit is a right worthy gentleman. But if he holds property by a questionable title it may be enquired into, for the law is no respecter of persons. But even here I shall pursue the enquiry no farther than what I think may be necessary to substantiate the present indictment.

Lord Chief Justice.—Ho, I understand you Sir Robert, you are like the sportsman, that would hunt down the fox, but whose hounds in the chase give uneasiness to the grazing stag. Such things must be endured, for we cannot change the laws of nature.

Attorney General.—Then proceed, old gentleman, and let us know if Delpot was an acquaintance of yours.

Foreright.—Why, he was somewhat of an acquaintance, for he was a near neighbour, but we were never friends, or ever had much to say one to the other. He was for Kirk and Parliament, and I for Church and King; however, from time time, I had business with him. I confess I never liked the man, for in the Great Rebellion he prospered mightily, having wrongfully got places which belonged to good and true men, and he made a mint of money, and so at last he was accounted the richest man in all our city. Howbeit, although he got wealth, he did not get happiness, for a bastard boy of his was an everlasting plague to him, which I did take to be a judgment upon him, for with all he had got he would never spare a penny to relieve his poor relations, and he had many of them.

Attorney General.—But what about the will which you supposed to be forged?

Foreright.—I 'll tell you all about it. I had many a time a talk with the old man about his poor kinsfolk, and wished him to do something for them, but he was such a stingy old wretch, he never would, saying that what he had earned and saved he meant to keep as long as he could; but every now and then his bastard, Captain Delpot, paid him a visit, and he was just as fond of him as the Devil is of holy water. [Here the Lord Chief Justice leaned back on his seat, and laughed right heartily.] There were always high words between them,

which was wont to gather a crowd around the house, but the young man had always the best of it, for he never left our town but with a well-filled bag of money.

Attorney General.—Can you tell me what was the nature of these disputes?

Foreright.—It was all about the old man's money. I remember that about two years before his death, the captain came to Winchester, and there was a terrible quarrel between father and son, and folks did say that the captain left our town in high dudgeon. Two or three days afterwards the old man sent for me, and said that he had been so shamefully treated by his son, by threatening to expose his shame, that he was determined to cast him off, and not to advance him another farthing during his lifetime, and at his death to leave him only a small portion of his property, and that the remainder should go to his niece, Agatha Kalendar, and other of his kinsfolks. Upon this I told him that it would be a great charity if he would give Mistress Kalendar a small sum, for she was miserably poor, and a widow with an infant child; this angered the old man, and he said if I spoke another word on the subject, Agatha should have nothing at his death, for he told her before she married Kalendar that if she married him she should have none of his money, nor should she as long as he lived, for his word's sake. He told me he had made his will, and that he had named Parson Vicks as his executor.

Attorney General.—Did you see the will?

Foreright.—Truly I did, and he read me a portion of it, because he knew that I was a friend of Mistress Kalendar.

Attorney General.—Should you know the will if you saw it again?

Foreright.—I believe I should.

Attorney General.—Call Gerard Wild [which was done, and he was sworn]. Now state what you are, and what you know about the prisoner?

Wild.—Please you, sir, I have the honour to be a tipstaff to His Majesty's Court of King's Bench, and on the first day of Hilary Term I received a warrant, signed by my Lord Chief Justice, to apprehend the Earl of Shaftesbury on the charge of high treason; and the same day, having obtained a sufficient escort, from fear that a rescue might be attempted by the "Shaftesbury boys," I proceeded to Wapping to execute it, as I heard the earl was about to fly the country.

and go to Holland. I went on board the *Sunbeam*, in which my lord had taken his passage, and there I found his luggage in the care of the prisoner; but my bird was flown, and had sailed down the river in a fishing-smack only an hour before.

Lord Chief Justice [muttering to himself].—Very unfortunate.

Wild.—However, says I, if I can't have master, I 'll have man, and I then and there took the prisoner into custody.

Attorney General.—And what did you find upon him?

Wild.—First, there were some dockyard papers, which I forwarded to Portsmouth, and on them he was afterwards committed for trial; secondly, there was this treasonable paper of——

Attorney General.—No matter about that.

Lord Chief Justice.—But I do say it does matter. Let me see it?

Attorney General.—With due deference to your lordship, I am not prosecuting the prisoner for treason, and the paper has nothing to do with the case.

Lord Chief Justice.—Whether it has or has not I shall see it. [The paper was handed up to his lordship.] Humph! what have we here? as pretty a specimen of puritanical cant and outrageous sedition as I have seen this many a day, You shall hear it, Sir Robert; it is well to know what vipers we have to deal with. "We have now had two wicked kings, who have permitted Popery to come in under their noses, and whom we can compare to none but the most wicked Jereboam. The sword of the Lord and justice struck down the one, and vengeance shall overtake the other."

Prisoner.—The paper was given to me, and I knew not the contents.

Lord Chief Justice.—It may be; but it was found upon you, and therefore suspicion rests against you. What else did you find on the prisoner?

Wild.—A parchment, which seemed to be the will of a person living in this town.

Attorney General.—Is this it?

Wild after examining the document].— It is.

Attorney General.—And now, John Foreright [handing both documents to him], look at these, and then please to say which, if either, bears the genuine signature of Jeremiah Delpot?

Foreright [putting on his spectacles and then carefully

examining and comparing what had been placed in his hands].—Please you, sir, my sight be dimmish to what it was, for I am three score and ten; and yet although I have not seen old Delpot's writing for many a year, I am as sure as a man well can be that this is the old fellow's signature, and this the handwriting of Parson Vicks—the first man in our city that died of the Plague, now more than sixteen years agone, and I say it on my Bible oath.

Attorney General.—And what do you say to the signature on the other document?

Foreright.—I should say, and I do say, that in my mind it is a forgery; and the more I put the two signatures together, and look at them, the more and more I am satisfied that old Delpot signed the other.

Attorney General.—I believe one of these two documents is dated August 9th, 1664, and is witnessed by Andrew Vicks, which we will call the old will; and the other is dated November 25th, 1665, and is witnessed by Francis Tyrrell, and which we will call the new will; and you say that the former bears upon it the genuine signature of Jeremiah Delpot, and that the other is a forgery?

Foreright.—I say so; and now I am more certain than ever upon it, for when that new will was dated old Delpot had a stroke, and could not use his right——

Lord Chief Justice.—A stroke, eh! what mean ye?

Foreright [shaking his hand].—A stroke! a stroke, my lord.

Attorney General.—Become paralysed?

Foreright.—That is it.

Lord Chief Justice.—Prisoner, do you ask this witness any questions?

Prisoner.—Yes, my lord; and first of all I should like to know, whether, soon after Master Delpot's death, he did not make a fuss about his will, and whether, when the will was shown him, he did not say he was satisfied, and he admitted the signature was that of Master Delpot?

Lord Chief Justice.—You hear what the prisoner says, and you must answer his questions.

Foreright.—As to being satisfied, I never said I was, and for a reason—the old man promised me that he would remember his poor kinsfolks, and none of their names are in the will. And as to my admitting that the signature was in his handwriting, I surely did say when it was shown to me, I could not gainsay it. I did not know the date of the will,

or allowed to see no more of it than the signatures; besides, my lord, I was in a peck of trouble of my own at the time.

Lord Chief Justice.—What kind of trouble?

Foreright.—The plague was in the city—a fearful time it was, my lord; friends and neighbours fell on the right hand and on the left, and none fared worse than I—wife and children all sank beneath it; [then arousing himself] but by mercy of Providence I was spared, though I would rather I should have gone than they.

Lord Chief Justice.—Cheer up, old man, we have all our troubles. In this world we are but mere travellers and sojourners.

Prisoner.—And so you mean to say, that after so many years, and according to your own showing, with your eyes got dim, you pretend to be a better judge of Master Delpot's handwriting now than you were then?

Foreright.—Not so. God forbid! I say I was so flurried at the time, that I did not give myself time to think; and besides, I hadn't the chance of comparing one signature with another.

Prisoner.—You said even now you knew my handwriting. Did you ever see me write?

Foreright.—Why, I can hardly say; I may or mayn't; but I knew your signature right well, having seen it hundreds of times in receipts for rent when you were old Delpot's handy-man.

Prisoner.—That goes for nothing, for you never saw me put my hand to paper. And again, you say Master Delpot could not have signed the will, because he had the palsy. How do you know it? did you ever visit him?

Foreright.—Not I. Do you think that I would keep company with a man that defended the trial and execution of the Blessed Martyr, and our right gracious Sovereign? Thou knowest better' I would have nought to do with the regicides, and very little with their defenders.

Prisoner.—Then how do you know he could not write?

Foreright.—I do know he was not out of his house for more than a year, and as to his having the palsy, it was the town talk.

Lord Chief Justice.—Town talk is not evidence. Witness, you must say what you know, and not what you have heard. Thou art a right honest fellow, and warmly to be commended for thy loyalty. Prisoner, do you ask any more questions?

Prisoner.—No, my lord, but I hope you will put it in your notes that he could not answer the questions I put to him.

Lord Chief Justice [stamping his foot].—Thou art an impudent scoundrel, and I am almost tempted to order thy fetters to be replaced. Call the next witness?

Attorney General.—Charles Vellam [he appeared and was sworn]. What are you, and what are those books and papers which you have in your hand

Vellam.—I have the honour to be the steward of the Hospital of St. Cross, and by the permission of the Master, I produce these books and papers, which contain in them the handwriting of my predecessor, the late Jeremiah Delpot.

Attorney General.—Can you speak positively to his signature?

Vellam.—I think I can. In my younger days I had much to do with him, and frequently saw him write and attest documents relating to the Hospital.

Attorney General.—Now look at the two wills, and see if they both or only one bear his genuine signature.

[The two wills having been handed to the witness, and he having examined the signatures of both, and compared them with the handwriting of the deceased contained in the Hospital books and papers, declared that the words Jeremiah Delpot, in the old will was in his handwriting, and the same words in the new will was not, but a palpable forgery, though cleverly executed.]

Lord Chief Justice.—Now let me have a sight of them, and when I have inspected the several signatures they shall be submitted first to the learned counsel, and then to the gentlemen of the jury.

[The documents were thereupon placed before his lordship, and engaged his attention for several minutes, but he made no remark. They were next placed on the counsel table, and were first looked at by Sir Robert Sawyer and Mr. Munday; and then by Mr. Pollenfex, who beckoned to his assistance the solicitor from whom he had received his instructions. The signatures were examined and compared one with the other several times, and an earnest conversation, though in whisper, took place between them. The barrister appeared angry, and the solicitor disconcerted, as they closed their investigations and handed the papers up to the jury.]

Foreman [on receiving them].—No use to I, seeing, my lord, I be no scholar, and can't read writing.

Second Juror [passing them on].—Nor I much.

Third Juror [having the two wills in his hands].—They be much of a muchness, and as like one another as two peas. Wouldn't venture to say which was which; [and then turning to the next juror] come neighbour, you be used to writing, being a parish clerk.

Fourth Juror.—Really the writing be much like our church briefs, and I should say in this [holding up the new will] the name is best.

Lord Chief Justice.—More pains taken in the writing of it?

Fourth Juror.—Truly, my lord, and therefore I should say that's the will.

Lord Chief Justice.—[ironically] Very conclusive.

Fourth Juror.—Shall I explain it to the rest?

Lord Chief Justice.—No. Let them judge for themselves, they are as competent as you are.

Fifth Juror.—But none of us be scholars, and we would rather take our say from your lordship.

Other Jurors.—Agreed, agreed.

Lord Chief Justice.—Gentlemen, you have exercised a very sound discretion in not dabbling in matters you do not fully understand; and I think that travelling Gospellers, who are a plague to our land, and State tinkers, who call themselves patriots, would do well to imitate. And, now Sir Robert, we call upon you to show how the prisoner became possessed of this very suspicious document?

Attorney General.—That I will do right speedily, my lord. Call Judith Colepepper.

[Here the prisoner turned pale, and became greatly agitated, as Alderman Foreright conducted a seemingly aged female from the other extremity of the hall, where she had been seated, to the place from whence she was to give her evidence.]

Prisoner [very excitedly].—That woman cannot be evidence against me.

Lord Chief Justice.—For why?

Prisoner.—She is my wedded wife.

Judith Colepepper.—Villain and murderer, thou liest; I disown thee, thou imp of——

Lord Chief Justice.—Silence, woman, or I will commit you. What does this mean, Sir Robert; is she the prisoner's wife?

Judith Colepepper.—I am not and will not be. The scoundrel——

Lord Chief Justice [with a loud and angry voice].—Silence, again, I say, or you shall beat hemp for a month.

Attorney General.—My lord, this matter requires a little explanation. I admit there was a kind of marriage between the parties, but not a legal one, and such as would entitle the prisoner to the privilege which he claims. The excellent form set forth in our Book of Common Prayer was not complied with, whilst the person who presumed to officiate, was one of those non-conforming ministers who were justly ejected from the churches they usurped.

Mr. Pollenfex.—In behalf of the prisoner, I submit that the marriage, though irregular, and thereby subjecting the parties to pains and penalties, is still a legal one, and therefore the wife cannot give evidence against her husband.

Lord Chief Justice.—That the irregularity does not affect the validity of the marriage is true, but to allow the plea that the woman should not be admitted as evidence, would be offering a premium for a non-compliance with a sacred ordinance, and sanctioning the usurpations of the Conventicle; but before we admit her evidence, it must be shown that the marriage was irregular. And now, woman, tell me where this alleged marriage took place, and who was the parson?

Judith Colepepper.—It was at the Conventicle, which used to be Master Ridge's malthouse; and the parson was Master Ebenezer Brackstone, that used to hold forth at the great church before the king's coming back, when he was turned adrift; but he found a friend in Master Delpot, for they were like two brothers.

Lord Chief Justice.—It is not enough, Sir Robert, to show that this parson was one of the ejected ministers for non-conformity, as it is possible that he was duly ordained and received orders, and afterwards fell as Judas did in the olden time; for the rule is once a priest, always a priest.

Attorney General.—I will show he was an intruder, and never received episcopal ordination. And now, John Foreright, stand up and state what you know of Ebenezer Brackstone?

Foreright.—I know he was no regular bred parson. Was never at Oxford or Cambridge, and was foul-tongued when he spoke of them; did'nt know more of Greek and Latin than I do, and that 's nothing at all. He came into our city a trooper, the very year they murdered the late King, and when they turned Clement's church into a guard-house—and there

I have seen him with his men, for he was a sergeant; and after that old Lisle, the mock lord-chancellor, that had his deserts across the water, when he was Master of St. Cross let him preach in his church—they said to please old Delpot, the steward—and after that he was one of the preachers at the Cathedral—not that I ever heard him, for I hated the set, and staid at home on Sundays and read Church service and Bible to my family, never failing to pray for the restoration of our good king, and for the destruction of all his enemies. Then the good time did come when Master Brackstone was bundled out, and then he and old Delpot set up a Gospel-shop of their own in the Soke, for we would not have such an abomination in the city.

Lord Chief Justice.—You are a noble fellow. Let the woman be sworn?

Prisoner.—I have another objection against her evidence. She is mad, and she has been long locked up as such in bridewell.

Judith Colepepper.—It was you, villain, that made me so.

Foreright.—She knows what she is about as well as I do.

Lord Chief Justice.—Let her be sworn?

Prisoner.—Stay, stay, my lord. If you are determined to admit her evidence, I, to avoid the pain of hearing that which I cannot gainsay, confess myself guilty.

Lord Chief Justice.—Do you wish to withdraw your plea of not guilty?

Prisoner.—I confess myself guilty that, acting at the instigation and under the threats of Captain Delpot, I forged one will and stole the other.

Lord Chief Justice [to the Clerk of the Arraigns].—Let his plea of guilty be entered in the record, and then let the other case be proceeded with.

Prisoner.—To that also I plead guilty, and humbly beg for mercy.

Clerk of the Arraigns.—Francis Tyrrell, hold up your hand [which he did]. You have confessed yourself guilty of felony; now what have you to say why judgment should not be passed against you?

Prisoner.—My lord, with a contrite and broken spirit, I humbly supplicate your mercy, for bitterly do I repent of my evil ways. Touching the forging and stealing my old master's will, I was as a man who could not help himself—mere clay in the hands of the potter. I was old Master Delpot's servant

for many years, but he was a stern man, and stingy withal, and begrudged me a fair payment for my services. He was a bitter Puritan, and a Commonwealth man, opposed to merry-makings, dancing, maypoles, and sports of all kind, which I did not see any harm in; and because he did not pay me enough, I was wont to stop a portion of his rents, for I collected them, that I might be on a par with other young folk, and be enabled to drink his majesty's health, which he never did. My companion was sometimes Marm Mitchell, who called himself 'Captain Delpot,' a great gambler. He was the old man's bastard, and every now and then he would come to Winchester to draw upon his purse, which he could not always do, and I was fool enough to be his tool. By and bye his affairs got desperate, and he came down from London in the hopes of getting some money; but the old man would not advance him a farthing, forbade him his house, and threatened that, instead of leaving him a goodly sum when he died, he should have nought but his curse. He had been ailing for some time, and the passion he got into with the captain brought on the palsy, from which he never recovered, and then it was that this Mitchell, knowing what I had done for myself, as well as him, threatened to have me taken up for robbing his father; and so, feeling myself in his power, and being promised to be well paid for my trouble, I did his bidding. But after all he played me false, and sold and pledged all the property he got under the will for but little more than Esau got from his brother Jacob. Many and many a time I thought of returning the will to the old man's kinsfolk, but I feared the consequences to myself. Then, as to taking the king's money at Portsmouth, my lord, I did it for the purpose of serving him by getting into the service of my kind patron's, the Duke of York, most deadly enemy, so that I might be a spy upon him, and give information of the evil designs of his party, as I did once before, for which I was warmly commended by those high in authority, and I therefore pray your lordship to give my case a most merciful consideration.

Lord Chief Justice.—Prisoner at the bar, you stand convicted of two heinous offences, and you must suffer the consequences of your guilt. With respect to your forging and stealing the will of Jeremiah Delpot, I must tell you, though he was, as I can readily believe, an evil-minded person, a contemner of dignities, and an upholder of the hellish doctrine that the people and not the king ought to be the

source of power, and an enemy to our most excellent church, and an encourager of schism and pretended godliness—that is no excuse for you, for the law is no respecter of persons; and then, as to your plea, that you were in a manner forced to the commission of the crime, you should have been more choice in your companions, and above all bore in mind the excellent directions of the church catechism, and kept your hands from picking and stealing; and therefore, for this offence, I order you to be publicly whipped at the cart's tail, from the West-gate to the East-gate of this city, and back again, and afterwards to stand in the pillory in the market place, on a market day, for the space of one hour. With respect to the offence of stealing the money, I am willing to give some credence to your tale, as I am not to learn that on a former occasion you gave some seasonable information on matters of importance; but I must tell you that our laws do not sanction the Jesuit axiom, that it is allowable to do evil that good may follow, or that the end sanctifies the means, which may do well for benighted Papists, but we enlightened Protestants know better. However, for this offence, I am not inclined to be severe, and content myself with ordering you to be detained in prison during his majesty's pleasure.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WEDDING.

"Triumphant beauty never looks so gay,
As on the morning of a nuptial day;
Love then within a larger circle moves,
New graces add, and every charm improves."

POMFRET.

HOWEVER arbitrary might have been the conduct of Lord Chief Justice Jefferies during the trial, and however violent his prejudices, and the partiality he displayed in all matters touching the king's prerogative and the supremacy of the Established Church, he could, when it suited his vein, be kind and considerate. His lordship had no sooner closed his note-book, than he beckoned to Mr. Pollenfex and his instructing solicitor to approach, and then, in a bland tone,

thus addressed them:—"Gentlemen, you have but sorry news to tell your client, but I hope that he, like a wise man, will make the best of a bad business. There can be no doubt that the genuine will was stolen by the prisoner and his associate, and that the one which was left behind and administered to is spurious, and there is no doubt that a court of law would establish the former, and therefore to attempt to defend the latter would be labour in vain, and money thrown away; and it is therefore my advice that you seek a friendly compromise with the kinsfolks of the deceased. If your client gives up the property which his father purchased of the younger Delpot, who had no just claim to it, I think he is fairly entitled to stand in the other's shoes in respect of whatever the old man intended he should inherit. As to the rents received since the old man's death, I will say nothing, but make the best bargain you can, and I will pave the way; and I do not know that you can do better than refer the matter to Sir Robert Sawyer, who, in addition to being his majesty's attorney-general, is a gentleman of substance in your county, and may ere long seek to be one of its representatives. I am sure he will act kindly, and fairly towards you, for he is a high-minded, honourable fellow." The barrister and the solicitor thanked his lordship, who next had a conference with Sir Robert, who intimated his willingness to become the mediator and referee.

The kind suggestion of the judge was not thrown away, and before the business of the assize was brought to a close, the question of the will was amicably arranged, and on far more favourable terms for Sir Pharaoh Ledger than his legal advisers could have anticipated; but for this advantage he was indebted to the forward zeal of his old Corporation opponent, Alderman Foreright.

Although at the time of his death Jeremiah Delpot had numerous poor relations, between whom he had bequeathed the far greater portion of his property, most of them had been swept away by the Plague, which greatly depopulated the city in 1666, and others had died subsequently, so that at the period of our tale the only existing claimants under the will were Mistress Kalendar, who was blind and bed-ridden, and her son Maurice, who was first made known to the reader as one of the city constables and a whitesmith on Silver Hill. To no one were both mother and son under greater obligations than to Alderman Foreright;—in the hour of need

there was always his helping hand, and accompanied by unvarying kindness and encouragement. At his cost the latter was apprenticed and afterwards started in business, and to these kindnesses were to be added the old man's services in the pursuit and detection of Tyrrell, and the recovery of the long lost will. For years the mother had thought that her old friend was one of the wisest as well as one of the best men in Winchester, and in him had the fullest reliance; whilst the young man looked up to him as more than a father, and therefore now, when prosperity beamed on them, they with grateful hearts confided their interests to their sincere, though indiscreet adviser.

The old man had been delighted with the Lord Chief Justice—his determination to solve the mystery of the will had quite charmed him, whilst his lordship's coarse invectives were music to his prejudiced ear. When informed that the judge had suggested a compromise, he declared himself in favour of one, and was ready to make any sacrifice that it might be effected, and, in spite of the remonstrances of his friend, Lawyer Denny, points were conceded which the other party had no reason to expect. Whatever old Delpot had left to his son, was made over to Ledger, who was allowed to compromise, on easy terms, for the rents he had received during the time he had been in possession of the property, so that in reality he was no loser by his father's usurous transaction with the spendthrift Mitchell, *alias* Delpot. Sir Pharaoh Ledger, fallen from his high estate, soon after left the city in which he could no longer be the foremost man. By the advice and assistance of Sir Robert Sawyer he entered the king's service, of which we have nought to report, save that at the battle of Sedgemoor he commanded a troop of the royal horse, and was drowned with several of his men in crossing the river Parrot, in hot pursuit, and within sight, of the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth.

The turn in the wheel of fortune of which we have spoken, was pleasing to the inhabitants of Winchester, as Sir Pharaoh Ledger had disgusted them by his unbounded pride, haughty demeanour, and the assumption of superiority over his fellow citizens, whilst Maurice Kalendar was much respected by all who knew him, from his industrious and sober habits, his civility, and above all his devoted attachment to his afflicted mother. Within a short time they took possession of the house which had been occupied by Sir Pharaoh, and it was

not long before Maurice was the declared and accepted lover of Alice Greenly, a match which had the entire sanction and approval of her uncle and aunt, the mayor and mayoress, whilst the old alderman (Foreright) almost danced with delight.

It may be readily imagined that the match was duly canvassed by the gossips of the city, but nought could be advanced against the young pair—the most cynical of the ladies allowed that Alice was tolerably good-looking, and all admitted that Maurice was a handsome fellow, and well deserved his good luck.

There is an old saying, that "misfortune finds strange bed-fellows," but sometimes fortuitous circumstances reconcile incongruous natures, and so it was with Alderman Foreright and Mistress Buskin. The former had always regarded the latter as a vain silly woman, whose greatest pleasure was to ape her betters, and whose principal study was to appear grand, whilst the lady on her part looked upon the alderman as a self-opinionated and vulgar old man, and who had no ideas of propriety and good breeding; and as they both chanced to be free spoken, and not given to conceal their thoughts, they had both learned long before in what estimation they were held in by each other.

Mistress Buskin, in her ardent love of ostentation, had determined that whenever the wedding should take place, it should be no common-place affair, but that it should startle the citizens by its magnificence; and declared that, as her niece was about to be wedded to the richest man in the city, she and her husband were resolved to show that they could do the thing handsomely, and that, in addition to the goodly dower to the bride, they would entertain the corporation and scores of friends with such a breakfast as they never beheld, tasted, or dreamed of.

This being reported to the old alderman, he in his turn declared he would not be beaten, and that if the mayor invited one hundred to breakfast, Maurice should invite two hundred to dinner—aye, and the more the merrier, for they might as well "be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

The lady, though surprised, was not displeased at the old man's spirit, and recklessness of expense, and as she knew him of old as one not to be moved from his purpose, and that his wish was almost law with Kalendar, she therefore, like a skillful general, sought to turn them to the

purpose which she had most at heart. Her easy and good-natured husband was made use of as a go-between, and in a very little time Mistress Buskin and Alderman Foreright understood each other, and had become sworn friends. From the young couple they expected and experienced no opposition. Alice, with a smile, submitted to all her aunt's arrangements, whilst Kalendar was but little inclined to object to any suggestion which his ancient friend might offer.

After mature consideration it was definitely settled that the wedding should take place on the twenty-fourth of June, which would be the first anniversary of the day on which the king honoured the city of Winchester by becoming a member of the Corporation; and it was also agreed that the mayor should give a grand breakfast, and the bridegroom a sumptuous dinner, at St. John's House, and that the invitations should be extended not only to all the members of the Corporation, their wives, and portions of their families, to the clergy and many other inhabitants of the city and soke, but to numerous friends at a distance who were to be the guests of either the mayor, Kalendar, or Foreright. Further, there was to be a procession of all the parties to and from church, the path of the bride and bridegroom was to be strewed with flowers, the bells were to ring all the day, in addition to which there was to be an ample distribution of bread, beef, and beer amongst the poor of the city.

Foreright, anxious that none of the parties who had assisted him in the search after either Kalendar or Tyrrell should be omitted, sent an invitation to the deputy-steward of Andover, and undertook a journey to Southampton, for the purpose of inviting Hugh Sampson and Parson Farr, in acknowledgement of their kindness in taking him to Netley. The former was well pleased with the invitation, and said that both he and his reverence would be delighted in being allowed to dance at the wedding, and then to have two or three days' stay in old Winchester. In his return homewards, the old man paid another visit to Crabtree-Green Farm, and not only persuaded his friend Farmer Durman to come, and to bring his daughter Rebecca, but even induced him to allow young Lavington, of Horton Farm, to accompany them.

On the same day that Foreright set out on his southern tour, Maurice Kalendar, having Will Foster, partly as a companion and partly as an attendant, journeyed eastward. The purport of the errand was, that Kalendar intended to pay his

respects to the worthy vicar of Selbourn, and personally to thank him for the great kindness shown him on Christmas-eve, and to invite him, and such portion of his family as he should please, to honour his marriage with their presence, and to become his guests for some days.

It had been suggested by Foster, and agreed to by Kalendar, that they should leave Winchester early in the morning, so as to reach Alresford to breakfast, and then on to Selbourn, as they were to return the same day. The May month was not ended when our travellers started on their journey on horseback, the best mode at that time of crossing the country. Although no rain had descended, the leaves of the trees were drenched with moisture, and every blade of grass glistened as if studded with pearls. In the fields a single wheat ear might here and there have been seen, whilst in the hedges the little birds had commenced their matins, and the lark—

> "Soar'd until th'*unrisen sun*
> Gleam'd upon her speckled breast."

On passing Magdalen Down, Foster interested Kalendar with the narration, grossly yet cleverly exaggerated by himself, of Alderman Foreright's adventure with Tom Wrang on the last fair-day, and then pointed out in the distance, on the opposite side of the Chilcomb vale, the dubious and dangerous path Kalendar must have pursued whilst on his route from Selbourn to Winchester.

"It was a mercy that I was spared," said Kalendar. "I seemed spell-bound, or I should not have declined the shelter which was offered me. Shall we hereafter cross the track?"

"I reckon we shall not till we are near the end of our journey," replied Foster.

A pleasant trot across the open downs brought our horsemen to where Seward's bridge now stands, but which then did not exist, and having crossed the cold gravelly stream they, within the distance of another mile, found themselves at the gateway of the Swan at Alresford.

Tom and Molly Skinner were both in attendance. The former took charge of the horses, and led them to the stable, followed by Foster; whilst the latter ushered Kalendar into the parlour, where, as we before stated, the justices were wont to hold their petty sessions.

"For the time we have to stay, landlady," said Kalendar, "your common room will answer our purpose as well."

"As you please, sir," answered the accommodating hostess, and then led the way into the kitchen.

Kalendar intimated that breakfast would be required, but declined giving any directions till his friend had been consulted, and no sooner was Foster appealed to than he commenced, "Hark ye, mother, we want no slops, but mighty ale! such as I am told Queen Bess used to take with her beefsteaks in the morning—aye, and what is better still, if it is to be had, a cup of mead. I would wager a trifle on the flavour of the Alresford honey; and on peeping into the larder my eyes fell in love with some speckled fish, and a mighty chine of a Hampshire hog. We 'll soon let you know what hungry travellers can do. We would starve your town within a week!"

The effrontery with which this was delivered startled Molly Skinner, and was anything but pleasing to Kalendar, who apologised for his friend's rudeness of manners, which he said he had picked up in foreign parts. The landlady was pacified, and within a few minutes Kalendar and Foster sat down to a well-spread table.

> "O'er their parch'd lips the rough metheglin glides,
> And the red dainty trout their knife divides."

The anxiety of Kalendar to proceed on his journey may be readily supposed, but he was detained longer at Alresford than he wished to be, in consequence of Foster getting into a friendly dispute relative to the ages of some of the king's race horses with Tom Skinner, in which dispute they were equally positive and well-informed. Tired of waiting, Kalendar mounted his horse and rode on, but had not reached Bishop's Sutton when he was overtaken by Foster, whose only apology was that he could not allow any man to know more about the king's horses than he did.

Kalendar made no reply, but inwardly blamed himself for having such a companion, and was puzzled to know how he should dispose of him when he reached Selbourn. Our horsemen passed in succession Ropley village, Rotherfield Park, where Kalendar began to feel his way, then East Tisted, and lastly the village, the name of which has been rendered immortal by the pen of our Hampshire naturalist, and where Kalendar, to his great delight, perceived the sign of the White Hart, at the front of which he dismounted, and, leaving his horse in charge of Foster, said, "In the business

which I have now in hand, I can dispense with your services: so you stay here and make yourself at home till my return, which may be some hours hence."

He then, having by inquiry learned the direction of the parsonage, made his way towards it. With steady step and thoughtful mind he approached the residence of his reverend friend, when he was startled by a tinkling noise, as if in imitation of music, and on looking over the box-hedge which separated the vicar's garden from the road, he saw two young females engaged in the task of attempting to hive a swarm of bees. His first thought was to offer assistance, but as it was probable that he might do more harm than good, and perchance drive away the bees, which were clustering on the pendant branch of an apple tree, and not far from the ground, he deemed it wise to remain where he was, and watch the operation. One of the females he recognised as a daughter of the vicar, and the other as the maid servant. The former had a brass skillet in her left hand, and a large key in the other, with which she struck the skillet with successive taps, and which emitted a sound somewhat resembling a gong, or, perhaps, a diminutive peal of bells—one-two-three four five; one-two-three-four-five. The servant had hold of the hive, to the interior of which she was applying a glutinous mixture—probably a compound of beer and honey. The monotonous tinkling lasted for some time, but whether—like Orpheus, as it is said, charmed the rocks by the music of his lyre—it had any effect on the Aperian race, or whether it was only their instinctive loyalty to their sovereign lady the queen, we will not presume to say, but certain it is that the bees gradually ceased their drony flight, and formed a mass on the branch, leaving only a few stragglers in the air. The young lady now laid down her skillet and key, beckoned to her assistant, and then boldly drew close to the encumbered branch, and the hive being held immediately under, she, with a gentle but sufficient jerk, shook the branch, and in an instant the whole of the bees were safely deposited in their future home. She then took the hive from the servant and cleverly reversed it, so that it stood in its proper position on a cloth which had been spread for the purpose on the grass.

After waiting a few moments to see that it was all right, the young lady said, "And now, Susan, we will go in-doors, and let them know we have done our work; and, to my fancy, we shall have another swarm either to-morrow or next day."

Kalendar now advanced, and met her at the door of the house, and, raising his hat from his head, inquired whether the worthy vicar was at home.

The lady replied in the affirmative, and then added, "Surely, sir, I have seen you before; but I am puzzled to say when, or where."

"But I can never forget," replied the other, "your father's —nay, all your kindnesses—to the tired and wandering traveller on Christmas Eve."

Before another word could be spoken, she held out her hand to Kalendar and bid him welcome, and then hastened into the house to give notice to her father.

The vicar soon made his appearance, and hearty and sincere were the greetings of the old and the young man.

"Walk in, my young friend," said the vicar, "and partake of that hospitality of which you hardly tasted at your last visit. Your packet, which reached me five days afterwards, relieved our minds of fears touching your safety, when you rashly encountered the coming storm against my well-intended advice. Your letter spoke of your gratitude to the All-directing Hand which safely delivered you from all the perils of that night, to say nothing of your acknowledgment of my poor services, to which you are ever welcome."

In the same room which on the former occasion Kalendar was entertained, he had now the felicity of meeting those who were then congregated there, and all, old and young, appeared equally pleased. It was indeed a happy and virtuous family. At the time of his arrival, the vicar and his two eldest sons, James and John, were discussing Cæsar's Commentaries, whilst his eldest daughter, Margaret, was instructing the younger children. Mistress Crocket was engaged in what may be called household duties; and how his second daughter, Kate, and the servant were employed, we have already spoken.

Kalendar took the first opportunity of stating the object which had brought him to Selbourn, and he briefly yet modestly narrated that which is already known to the reader, and then added that in the day of prosperity he wished not to forget his friends in his hour of adversity, and had to invite his reverence not only to honour his marriage by his presence, but that he, with his two eldest daughters and two sons, should be his guests for a week.

The old man was taken by surprise, grasped the hand of his young friend, and wept.

"You undo me by kindness. Your remembrance of the little service I rendered you, reminds me of that expression in the Gospel, of the sower that went out to sow his seed—'and some fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold.' Your offer is so tempting, that I know not how to refuse it. I should like once more in my life to visit old Winchester, where, among its many clergy, I may meet with Oxford acquaintances when I was at Maudlin. I should much like to pay my respects to my worthy diocesan, Bishop Morley, in his new palace, and to see the grand one which they say the king is building. My girls, who are not much of travellers, never having been farther from our village than the town of Alton, will be delighted with your fine cathedral; and the boys, now I have got a nomination for John as a demy at Maudlin, will be well pleased with the college, and so there will be pleasure for all of us, and the only question is, how to get there."

"And I pray your reverence not to trouble yourself in that matter,—I will provide the means."

"Nay, that must not be—I have good friends and neighbours, and shall not lack the means of travelling. A young friend will form our escort."

"And he shall be as welcome as yourself," answered Kalendar.

After accompanying the vicar round his orchard, and paying a visit to the church, Kalendar sat down, with the whole of the household, to a substantial, though plain dinner. In the afternoon they had another turn together, in company with Margaret and the two boys. The parson pointed out to his visitors many of those interesting objects which a century later were so graphically described by the justly-famed Gilbert White. In succession they visited the Pleister, the Hanger, and the site of the old Priory.

"Sorry churchmen," said his reverence, "were our prior and canons, for they were oftener aroused by the huntsman's horn than the matin bell; they knew neither Advent nor Lent, and actually sold their plate, vestments, and relics to replenish their cellar. Such could not last for ever, and our good Bishop Waynfleet dispersed them far and wide, dissolved their house, and transferred its possession to Maudlin College, of which I was a long time a fellow."

The agreeable conversation of the old man, and the friendly behaviour of the whole family, detained Maurice longer than

he intended, and it was not till the shadows of the elms of the churchyard were lengthened by the setting sun, that he could muster courage to bid his friends good-bye, and make his way to the White Hart.

Here he found Foster in his glory, seated on a settle, smoking a pipe, and discoursing to a number of rustics on

> ——"Hounds and their various use,
> And not less various breed."

He was listened to as to one inspired, and Kalendar was unwilling to interrupt him, till the other was about to change the subject, and to have his say on horses, and which he feared would be interminable, and then reminded him it was full time to start. Foster acceded, and bidding his admirers good-night, was soon in the stable, and soon after at the inn door, and within a few minutes our travellers had left the village.

As the bridal day approached, Mistress Buskin was the more and more anxious that it should be written down as a *red-lettered day* in the annals of Winchester, and unbounded was her delight when she was informed by her friend the townclerk that his majesty's long-promised presents—a full-length portrait of himself, painted by Sir Peter Lely, and four handsome maces of silver gilt, had arrived. The lady soon decided that the picture should at once be hung in St. John's House, and that the maces should be shown and used for the first time on the occasion of the wedding. "Buskin can call his fellows about him, and go to church and go as a mayor ought to go, with his maces before him."

A letter received from Master Dowling, the deputy-steward of Andover, was equally satisfactory to our friend Alderman Foreright. It was to the intent that he felt himself greatly honoured by being invited to the marriage feast, and should certainly attend; and as he did not like to come empty handed two fine fawns of Hurstbourn Park would arrive by the Whitchurch carrier, which he begged the alderman to accept, as a mark of that respect which an honest Whig was ever willing to pay to a high-minded and noble-spirited Tory.

"Humph," ejaculated the old boy, "very complimentary from the other side; but no one could ever say that Jack Foreright thought the worse of a neighbour because he didn't think as he thinks."

The Feast of the Nativity of the Holy Baptist at length

arrived, and at the appointed hour there were at St. John's House a goodly muster of white robed virgins, and civic dames in many-coloured silks, aldermen in their scarlet robes, parsons in their gowns and bands, and all in their very best apparel. We need hardly say that Alice Greenly was "th' observed of all observers," and that

> "Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone,
> But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone."

She was arrayed modestly, and as neatly as her aunt's excessive love of finery would permit. Her robe, or gown, was of a grey shotted silk, with a stomacher thickly studded with pearls, but which did not reach so high as the neck, and with sleeves which descended but half way to the elbows, and deeply fringed with the finest Brussel's lace. The shoes, of purple morocco leather, were fastened by diminutive silver buckles. Around the head was a wreath of white roses, interspersed with coloured pearls, under which her ringlets of glossy auburn hair drooped to the neck in all their native luxuriance. Mistress Buskin was more superbly arrayed, and no expense or trouble was spared to give her a youthful appearance. The dress of the bridegroom was that of an unassuming gentleman of the period. A coat somewhat resembling the tunic of the present time, but with an upright collar, and with sleeves puffed and slashed, and of a colour now rare—an azure or Bedford blue. The vest was a light kersey, which was succeeded by white tights, descending no lower than the knees, and which were there fastened, or rather ornamented, with ribbons, the bows of which were conspicuous. The legs were encased with hose of mottled worsted, and the shoes, which were low at the heel and high at the instep, were closed by tasseled ribbons. Around the neck there was a cambric scarf, which tied in front, and descended nearly a foot in front of the coat, whilst a round hat, with a broad brim and low crown, and with its band fastened by a jewel, completed the costume.

Amongst the company there were many whom we have already introduced to the reader. First there was his worship, Alderman Buskin, with his rotundity of form, and with a face resembling a full moon. To him it is a great and happy occasion; he feels his position as the chief magistrate of England's oldest city, the giver of the feast, and the guardian and foster-father of the lovely bride, and yet as a mighty sove-

reign, whose empire is undisputed, he had a smile and a welcome for all, and doubly was his kindness and condescension displayed to strangers, and to those whom he considered had honoured him by their company. Mistress Buskin was equally attentive to the comfort of her guests, and found a trusty squire and assistant in the ever-smiling widower from Andover, Dan Dowling, the deputy-steward, who showed himself equally at home at a bridal feast, as in the turmoils of an election contest. Then there was Alderman Foreright, and his Southampton friends, Hugh Sampson and Parson Farr. The old man could hardly curb the exuberance of his delight at the consummation of a cherished scheme, a secret which he had wormed out and kept to himself. The parson was much pleased with Lely's portrait of the king, and poured out his commendations on the striking resemblance, and the taste displayed in the arrangement of the robes; whilst Sampson scrutinized the workmanship of the new maces, which were displayed to their best advantage. The inspection may be resembled to the plucking of a rose from its stem, for whilst the flower charms the eye with its beauty, and delights the scent by its fragrance, the leaves conceal sharp thorns; and the sharp thorns to Sampson were, that such a present should be made to Winchester in preference to the more important town of Southampton, and he was not a man to conceal his thoughts, and he thus addressed his companion.

"Kissing, we all know, goes by favour, and here we have it with a vengeance. Our mighty port and goodly town goes for nought when a favour is to be granted. How much do our customs and excise send up yearly to the King's Exchequer? seven to one, I warrant, to what is sent up from this place, and yet it is to have four beautiful maces, and we none, to say nothing of that piece of daubery upon which you have been feasting your eyes."

Patience, man," replied the other, quietly. "If you would take my advice, Southampton shall share the king's favour, and have four maces, and other privileges to boot."

"How?" said the other eagerly.

"Turn Tory; send your Whig friends and advisers to Jericho, and seven degrees beyond it; acknowledge the error of your ways, and submit to the king's good graces; surrender your old charter, and like bread cast upon the waters it shall return after many days, and with a large increase; and then you shall have bran new maces, and increased privileges."

"And that is what I won't do;—no, not for forty maces. What! Hugh Sampson turn truckler? I promise ye, he would again sooner use the hammer and sweat at the anvil. I have done it before and would do it again, rather than take your logic, Master Parson. The king will find me a loyal subject, but an Englishman who will not bate an inch of his liberty, nor of that of a town which once made him mayor."

To return to the company. Alderman Wonger appeared in a sober suit, and with his scarlet robe on his left arm, and was accompanied by his son Peter, most foppishly arrayed. Our old friend the Townclerk, and Mistress Fidge were also present. With the former there was a continual rubbing of hands; he chatted with the one, and then with another, and told odd stories, to his own as well as others' gratification, but during the whole day the serenity of his countenance was not once disturbed; there was no uplifting of hands and spreading out of fingers, but he fairly ignored the Patriarch Job and all his sufferings; and was several times in conversation with Master Roger Coram, who had the pleasure of presenting to Alice, as a token of his respect and good wishes, a richly-jewelled silver cross, which once belonged to Queen Henrietta Maria, the king's mother.

Among the non-residents of the city there were the good Vicar of Selbourn, and his two eldest daughters and two sons who were accompanied by a tall young man with very sandy hair, being none other than Harry Knight of Street; and Farmer Durman, of Crab-tree Green, with his daughter Rebecca, and her admirer and future husband, John Lavington of Horton Farm.

A breakfast in the reign of Charles II. differed greatly from a breakfast in the reign of Queen Victoria. On this occasion the tables were loaded with sirloins of roast and rounds of boiled beef, haunches of mutton, hams, gammons, and chines, with other viands quite as substantial, together with trout and eels—the fish of the Itchen—either fried or broiled. Tea and coffee had not then taken place of the more ancient beverages ale and wine, though they were admitted as adjuncts and luxuries.

The meal having been discussed, the next matter was the arrangement of the procession to the church of St. Maurice, and here a slight difficulty arose; it had been intended that the bridal train should include the Corporation, that the mayor might have the pleasure of conducting to church his

darling girl, but his learnedship the townclerk having signified as his opinion that if the maces were used for any other than a strictly civic procession, they would be liable to be declared forfeit, and the mayor and aldermen to pains and penalties, it was deemed advisable that the mayor and corporation should first go to the church in their customary state, and that the bridal train should follow. Then the question arose who should have the honour and pleasure of being his worship's deputy as the escort of the bride? There was no lack of candidates, but the ladies decided almost unanimously in favour of the Andover widower.

The procession was a long one, and such as was never before seen in Winchester, save on royal occasions. The whole of the route from St. John's House was strewed with wild flowers by children, under the direction of Will Foster, and which had been gathered by old Sam, who now sported for the first time in his life in a perfectly new suit, which had been provided for him by the bridegroom.

At the church door Master Dowling resigned the fair form, he would gladly have retained, to the mayor, and great was the satisfaction of all parties on hearing that Doctor Kenn had volunteered to perform the marriage ceremony, giving this as his reason,—"When Kalendar was a chorister of the College, I, as one of the Fellows, had an opportunity of knowing what a good boy he was, and as since he has always acted to our Wykehamical text, 'Manners maketh man,' I come to give a public approval of his conduct, and invoke for him and his chosen, the special blessing of our Common Father."

The nuptial knot was tied, and at the conclusion of the service, the congregation with one accord commenced singing unaccompanied, (for organs were not then known in parish churches,) the anthem, "God save Great Charles our King," and had reached the verse "Oh Lord, Our God, arise," when Alderman Foreright suddenly left his place and made towards the bottom of the church, and then went out of the door, no one knew whither.

In due time the procession reformed and returned to St. John's House, and great was the surprise of the whole company at the unaccountable absence of the alderman. On the tables were to be seen huge cakes, prepared by the bride's own hand, and various kinds of wines, and when the company had tasted of the cakes, and drank to the healths, first of the new married couple, and then of the mayor and mayoress, they

broke up till they should re-assemble at dinner, and Maurice Kalendar conducted his wife to her future home.

During the marriage ceremony, there was one present in spirit though absent in person, and that was the bridegroom's blind and bed-ridden mother. At the very moment she thought the service would commence, she bid her attendant, Judith Colepepper (whom her son had engaged to wait upon her,) to read the same, which she did, word by word, and then the 98th and 136th Psalms, and also the *Nunc dimittis*, in all of which she joined with fervency and devotion, and great was her joy when she heard the well-known voice of her boy, and then of his gentle bride, as they knelt by her bedside, and begged her blessing on them, and readily did she give it, and earnestly did she pray that Heaven would bless and preserve them.

But to return to the alderman. During the singing of the National Anthem, his attention was directed to an elderly gentleman standing towards the bottom of the church, whom he thought he ought to know, and who joined in the chorus with more than common earnestness, upon which he left his place for the purpose of inviting him to the feast, but when he reached the spot where the stranger had stood he found that he was gone, and not liking to be baulked, hurried out of the church in search of him, but he was not to be seen: and instead of whom he saw Master Coram, to whom he did not hesitate to reveal his purpose.

A smile gleamed on the usually grim visage of the Catholic, who in a whisper said, "Did you know the name of that gentleman, you would not so honour him."

"I would, even if his name were Beelzebub. Did he not sing with heart and soul, 'scatter his enemies, and make them fall?' Welcome he shall be, and find him I will!"

"I do not know," said the other with a very knowing look, "whether his name would not be even more odious to you than Beelzebub! What say you to Cromwell?"

The alderman started, and then rejoined "If it be Cromwell, and he the son of old Oliver, he shall be welcome, for I am assured he is an honest and loyal fellow; no matter what were the misdeeds of him who is dead and gone; for there is One, and One only, who has a right to 'visit the iniquities of the father unto the children to the third and fourth generation.'"

"If that be your mind, come with me," said Coram: and

the other, quite forgetful of the bridal party, accompanied him to his town residence, where he was introduced to Master Richard Cromwell.

"I and this worthy gentleman have met before," said the ex-Protector with a smile.

"Ah! and now I mind me," replied Foreright, rubbing his bald pate, "it was at the house going into Southampton. I remember me I was rather bold in the tongue, and if I gave offence, I beg pardon; for I cannot forget that you proposed we should drink to his Majesty's health."

"And will again if our host will furnish us with the necessary materials for the work."

During the temporary absence of Coram, the alderman invited and warmly pressed Cromwell to honour his newly-married friend by his company at the feast, but which the other most courteously yet firmly declined. For his own comfort, he would not say safety, he deemed it advisable to live retired from the world, and even to assume another name, but he had seen and heard enough of young Kalendar to be interested in his welfare

Master Coram placed before his guests some excellent Burgundy, with which they were well pleased, and a full hour was spent in social chat, when the great event of the day being recalled to his mind, Foreright took his leave, but not before he had promised that some fine day he would walk over to Hursley Lodge; and away he went muttering to himself "Wonders will never cease—who would have thought that I, John Foreright, should shake hands, and drink wine with the son of the anointed of the Old One. Stop, stop, stop, I must not say so; Master Cromwell is a worthy gentleman, no matter what he was that went before."

It was no idle boast of the alderman when he said that if there should be one hundred to breakfast, there should be two hundred to dinner, at St. John's House, for more than that number sat down to an entertainment, which had not been surpassed in civic history: and if it lacked some of the varieties and luxuries of a modern feast, it presented a superabundance of substantial viands. Kalendar presided, having the mayor on his right, and his bride on his left hand, whilst Alderman Foreright was as merry as a cricket in the discharge of the duties of vice-president.

As by the kind permission of the Warden of the College,

not only the alderman's two grandsons, Walter and Philip Newbolt, but several of their playmates, were among the guests, it was arranged that the youngsters should chant the well-known Wykehamical grace, *Benedic nobis, Domine Deus*, and the *Non nobis, Domine non nobis*; and subsequently sing that time-honoured song, *Domum, dulce Domum*. The good parson of Selbourn was delighted, whilst his sons were lost in admiration. Parson Farr marked time with his hand, and tossed his head triumphantly, and several times with his elbow jerked his neighbour Sampson, who looked about as if to understand the meaning.

In addition to the above there were during the time the company were at the table a succession of toasts and songs, but after-dinner eloquence had not then come into fashion.

Early in the afternoon the greater portion of the company left St. John's House for the garden of St. Mary's Abbey, where a spacious bower had been erected, under the superintending eye of Will Foster, and in which dancing speedily commenced to the music of the pipe and tabor. Till after the going down of the sun, the youthful citizens continued to trip on the "light fantastic toe;" but when "twilight grey had in its livery all things clad," few remained. Two hours previous to this Master Kalendar with his bride, and accompanied by the Selbourn parson and family, returned home, an example which was followed by the mayor and mayoress; but not so with old Foreright, who, with his Southampton friends, lingered to the last, for the occasion had called up all the boy within his soul, and had made him young again.

Having completed our tale, it will be naturally expected that we should say a few words of the after-life of some of the actors therein.

Maurice Kalendar and his wife lived long and happy together, and several children crowned their union. That his should not be an idle and useless existence, he engaged in business as a wine merchant. He became a member of the Corporation, and in good time was elected an alderman, and had the honour of being mayor (as he was several times afterwards) when Prince George of Denmark, the husband of Queen Anne, was presented with the freedom of the city.

Goody Kalendar, though she was never to feast her eyes by seeing, her ears were blest with what the poet enumerated as

being sweet—"the lisp of children and their earliest words." She found an attentive and affectionate nurse in Judith Colepepper, who after her death remained in the household of her son, respected by himself and wife, and beloved by their children.

Old Sam's services were not forgotten or allowed to pass unrewarded. He had need no longer to range far and wide to obtain a precarious livelihood, since, at the townclerk's office, he received weekly more than sufficient for his maintenance. Walter and Philip Newbolt remained in Winchester College for some years, and were both elected to New College, Oxford. The first embraced the legal profession, and became a distinguished lawyer, and the latter entered the church, and became an eminent divine. Of the family of the good parson of Selbourn all we know is, that Margaret married Farmer Harry Knight, of Street; that John was admitted a demy of Magdalen College, and James a scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

But what of Alderman Foreright? It is our pleasing task to state that to his last hour he displayed the same zeal, independence, and earnestness of purpose, for what he deemed right, as he had ever shown through life. In August, 1685, Lord Chief Justice Jefferies paid a second visit to Winchester. On this occasion it was a Special Assize, for the trial of persons concerned in the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion.

Mistress Alice Lisle, a lady full ninety years of age, and of gentle blood, residing at Moyles' Court, near Ringwood, and the widow of John Lisle, who was one of the regicides, and Lord President of the Council during the Commonwealth, was charged with high treason in harbouring two of the rebels after the battle of Sedgemoor. We need not give the particulars of this most shameful trial, in which the Judge stormed, cursed, and swore, bullied the witnesses, insulted the prisoner, and by threats insisted on the jury returning a verdict of guilty, which they did, and how, on the following morning, he sentenced this venerable lady to be burnt alive. Foreright was present during the trial, and the conduct of the judge was such, that his former admiration of him was converted into the most bitter hatred. To his honest soul, the intimidations, bullyings, and unfairness displayed by him that sat upon the bench, were disgusting, and in the sickness of his heart, he writhed and groaned.

The barbarity of the sentence moved the pity and indigna-

tion of all classes, among whom were the clergy of the Cathedral, who remonstrated with the Lord Chief Justice, and even shamed him into the concession that the sentence should be stayed five days. And during that time Foreright was not idle, and however strong were his prejudices against the memory of Lisle the Regicide, he was determined nothing should be wanting on his part to save the life of his widow. With a petition to the king, praying his majesty to extend his clemency to the prisoner, he threaded the streets of the whole town, begging the signatures of all the inhabitants; and not content even there, he made his way to Southampton, where, by the aid of both Sampson and Farr, he greatly increased their numbers. But it was all in vain: James II. was inexorable, and in spite of numerous petitions and personal applications, the only remittance of the sentence which could be obtained was, that Mrs. Lisle should be beheaded, instead of being burnt to death, and beheaded she was, on the third day of September, one thousand six hundred and eighty-five, in the Market Place of Winchester: and the old man took it so much to heart, that his whole frame was convulsed, which, with his over exertion in obtaining signatures, brought on a fever, under which he sank and died. According to his desire he was buried with his kinsfolks of ten generations, on St. Giles' Hill, where, till the commencement of the century, was to be seen a headstone inscribed:—

HERE LYETH THE BODIE

OF HONEST

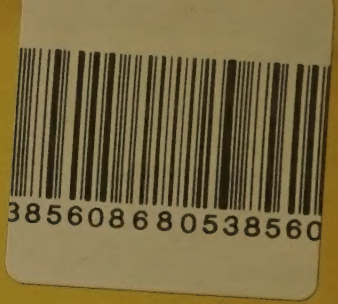
IOHN FORERIGHT,

AN ALDERMAN OF Ye CITYE.

HE DYED Ye 7TH DAY OF SEPT., 1685.

AGED 72 YEARES.

JOHN T. DOSWELL, PRINTER, WINCHESTER.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